



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

HN 3S67 +

ALONG SEARCH

BY MARY A. ROE

P 880

Boston Library Society,

No. 18 BOYLSTON PLACE.

ADDED TO THE LIBRARY

21 day of January 1886
To be returned in 5 Weeks days.

A fine of Three Cents will be incurred for each day this volume
is detained beyond that time.

CANCELLED

1940

1898

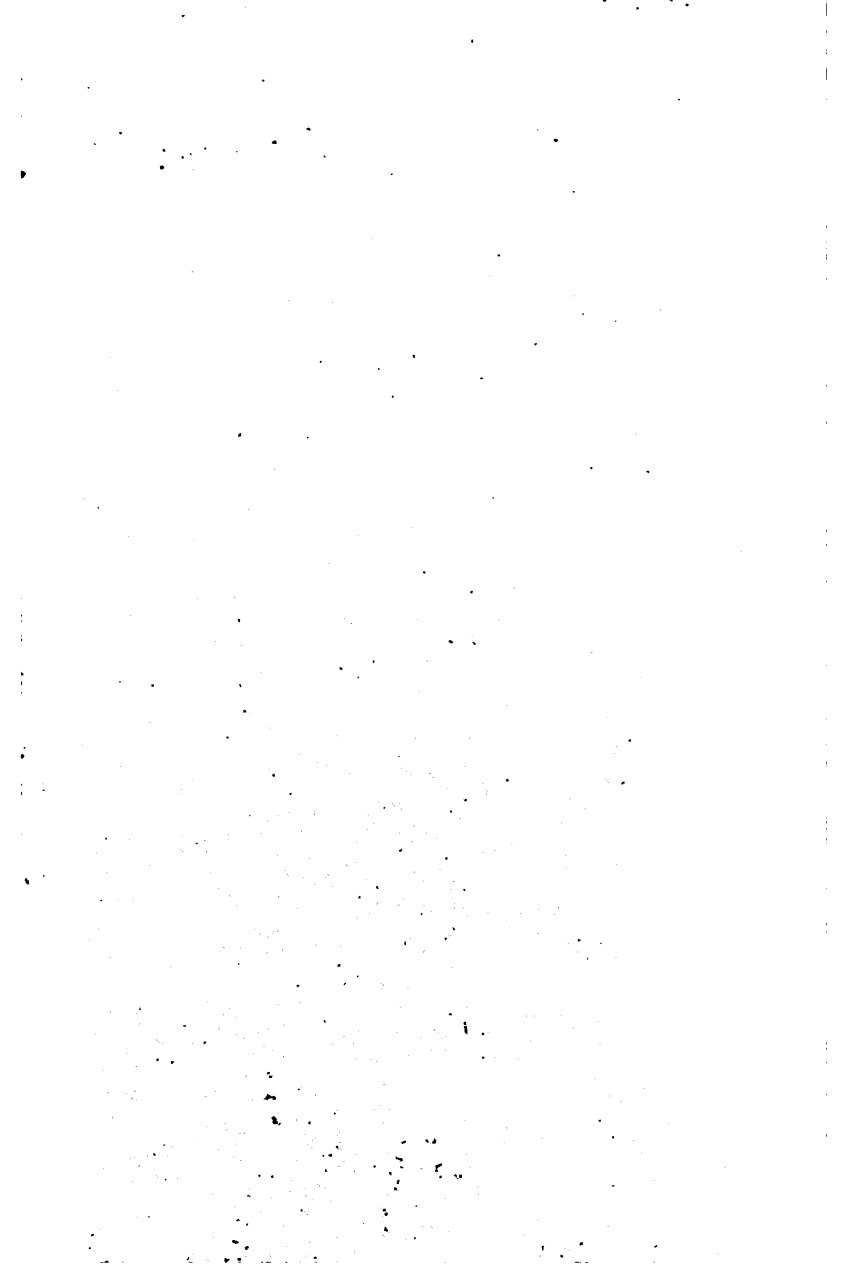
524

2

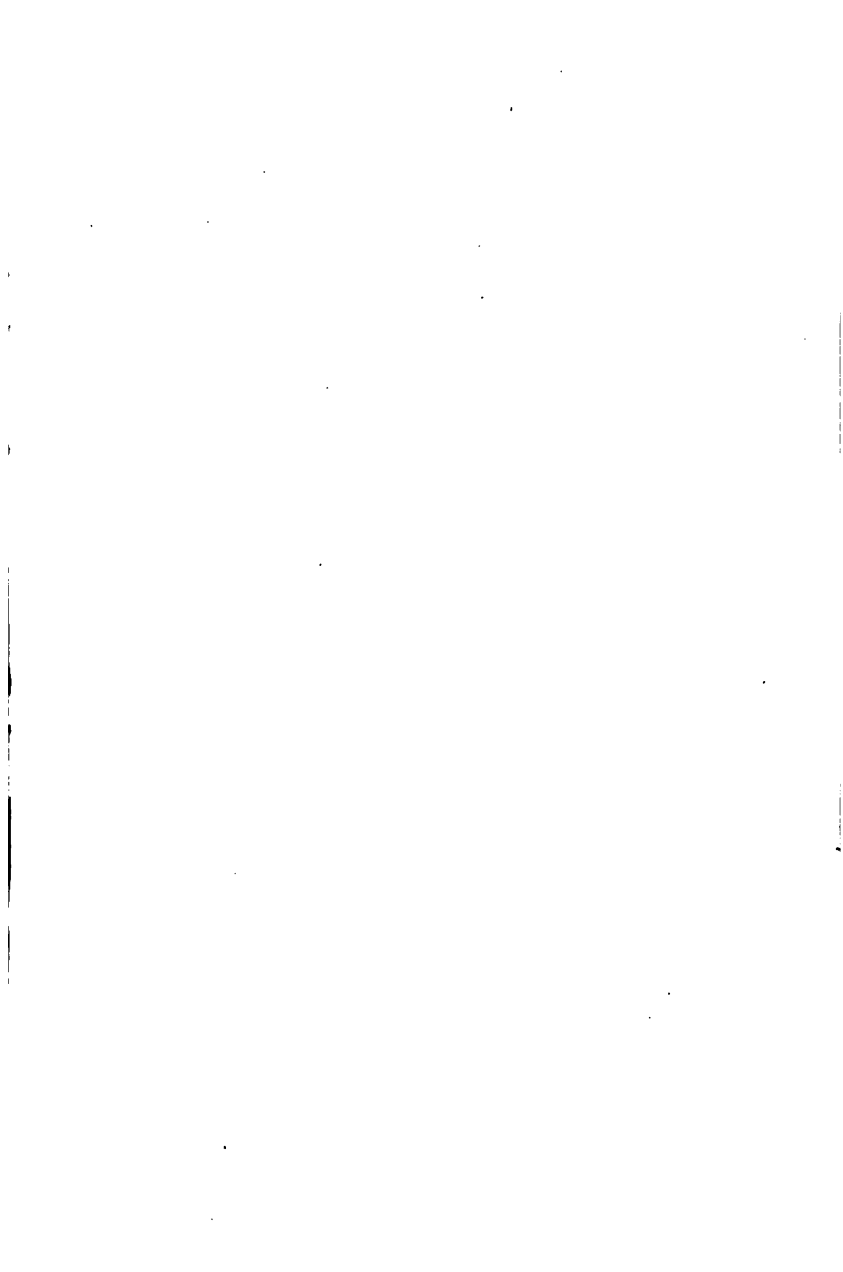
1897

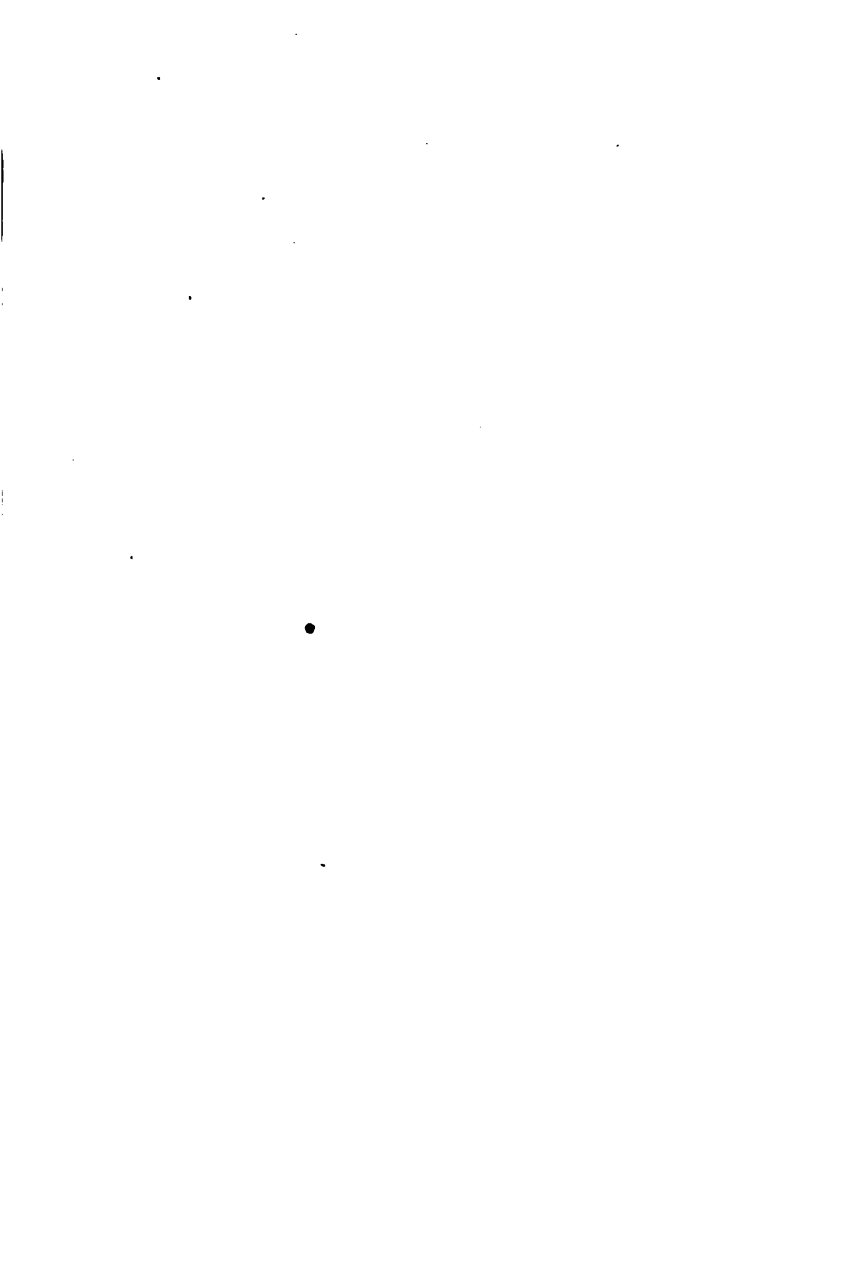


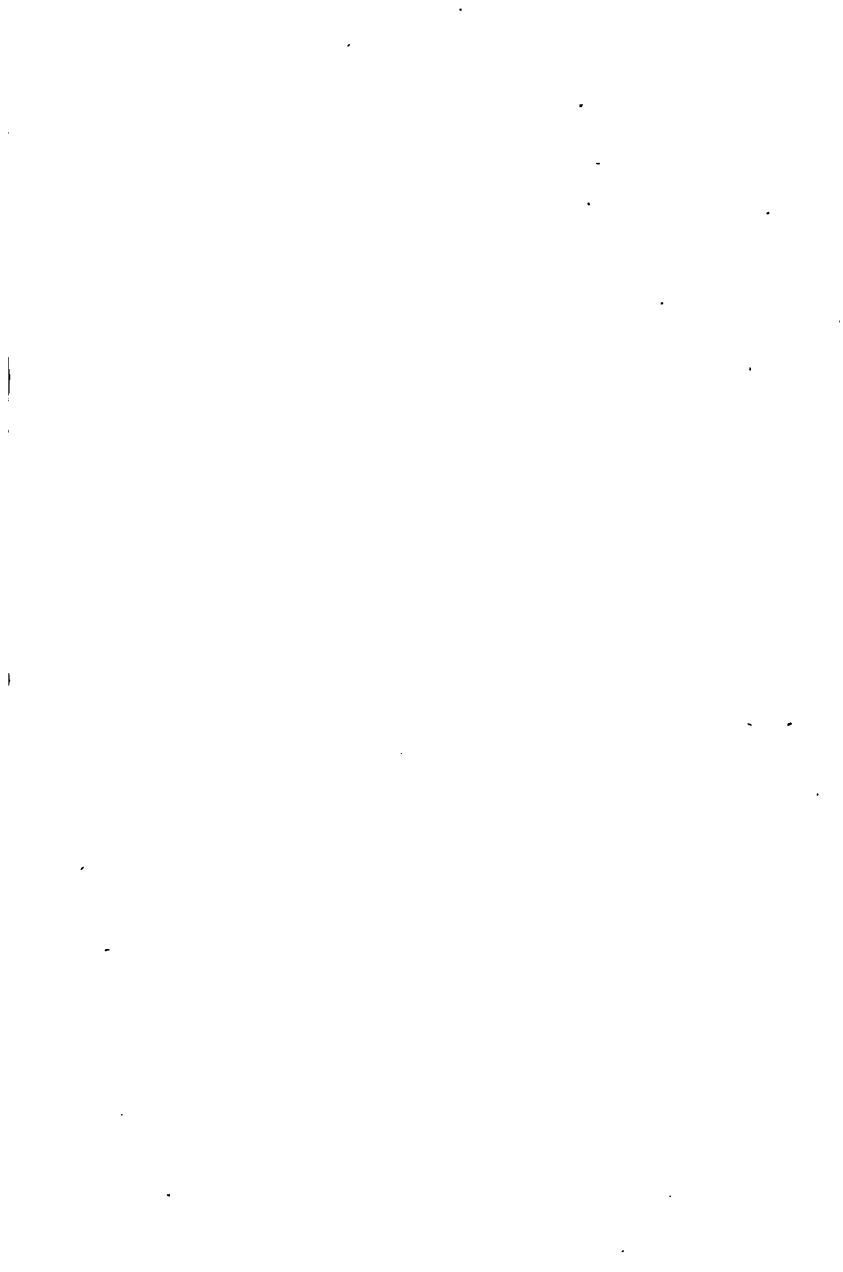


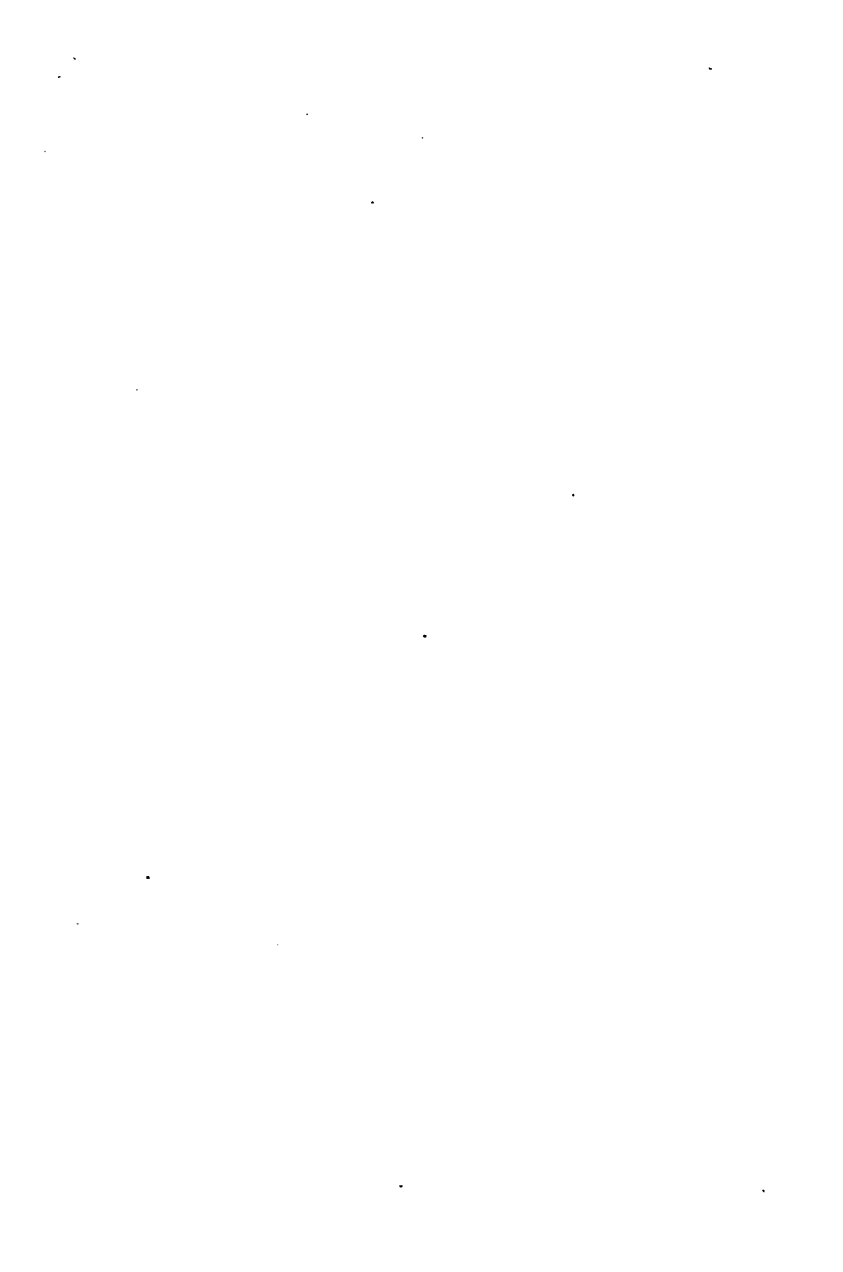












A

LONG SEARCH

BY

MARY A. ROE

AUTHOR OF "FORGING THEIR OWN CHAINS"

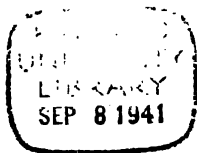
NEW YORK

DODD, MEAD & COMPANY

PUBLISHERS

~~R6212~~

KP880



Copyright, 1885, by
DODD, MEAD & COMPANY.

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

	PAGE
THE PRAIRIE.....	I

CHAPTER II.

A CHILD'S STORY.....	13
----------------------	----

CHAPTER III.

A VISIT TO THE FORT.....	21
--------------------------	----

CHAPTER IV.

THE ESCAPE.....	32
-----------------	----

CHAPTER V.

CAPTAIN HAYWOOD'S OFFER.....	43
------------------------------	----

CHAPTER VI.

THE NEW HOME.....	50
-------------------	----

CHAPTER VII.

THEY MEET AGAIN.....	64
----------------------	----

CHAPTER VIII.

PASSING UNDER THE SHADOW.....	77
-------------------------------	----

CHAPTER IX.

LIFE IN THE COUNTRY.....	PAGE 82
--------------------------	------------

CHAPTER X.

AN AFTERNOON STROLL.....	91
--------------------------	----

CHAPTER XI.

A RAMBLE IN THE WOODS.....	100
----------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XII.

RADCLIFF SEEKS TO AROUSE JEALOUSY.....	118
--	-----

CHAPTER XIII.

THE DINNER PARTY.....	136
-----------------------	-----

CHAPTER XIV.

A PIC-NIC AT WEST POINT.....	151
------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XV.

FINDING A CLEW.....	167
---------------------	-----

CHAPTER XVI.

FIRST DAYS IN ROME.....	184
-------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XVII.

TWO PICTURES.....	198
-------------------	-----

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

iii

CHAPTER XVIII.

	PAGE
SEEKING THE OLD HOME.....	205

CHAPTER XIX.

A DAY WITH THE PAST.....	212
--------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XX.

A LUNCHEON PARTY AMONG THE RUINS OF POMPEII..	223
---	-----

CHAPTER XXI.

DOUBTS AND STRUGGLES.....	235
---------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XXII.

PLOTS AND COUNTERPLOTS.....	245
-----------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE CHALLENGE.....	259
--------------------	-----

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE BRIGANDS.....	270
-------------------	-----

CHAPTER XXV.

TWO WAYS OF MEETING TROUBLE.....	286
----------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XXVI.

A STAGE RIDE BY NIGHT.....	302
----------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XXVII.

	PAGE
ROBERTA'S STORY.....	315

CHAPTER XXVIII.

COLONEL HAYWOOD.....	327
----------------------	-----

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE SEARCH IS ENDED.....	334
--------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XXX.

CAST ADRIFT.....	344
------------------	-----

CHAPTER XXXI.

TIDINGS AT LAST.....	360
----------------------	-----

CHAPTER XXXII.

AGAIN IN THE HIGHLANDS.....	371
-----------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XXXIII.

ACROSS THE OCEAN ONCE MORE.....	377
---------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE CONCLUSION.....	388
---------------------	-----

A LONG SEARCH.

CHAPTER I.

THE PRAIRIE.

LATE one afternoon near the close of May, George Morton, a youth of nineteen, was slowly riding through a dense forest in the then almost unknown territory of Illinois. With difficulty he guided his horse through the thick undergrowth, his watchful eyes carefully noting the notched trees that marked an old Indian trail. Soon he came to the summit of a ridge from whose base stretched a vast prairie. Far as his eye could reach it rolled in gently undulating billows of green grass and bright-hued flowers, that rose and fell with the fitful summer breeze.

Pausing under a tall tree upon the edge of the hill, he fastened his horse's bridle to one of

the branches, and from his saddle swung himself into the tree, climbing to the topmost boughs where he seated himself to gaze at leisure upon the scene so unexpectedly revealed. Not a vestige of animate life was visible; not the note of a bird, or even the chirp of an insect broke the awful monotony. What was this young man doing in this lonely wilderness?

His black hair thrown carelessly back showed a face bronzed by exposure; his hard hands, his well-knit, muscular form full of the strong vitality of youth and health, declared him fit for any labor or endurance; while his flashing eyes and expressive mouth disclosed a nature full of passion, thought, and imagination. What scope for action could such qualities find in such a place?

Such apparently was his own feeling, as he looked out upon the uninhabited prairie. It was not the New World; not nature clothed with virgin forests that he craved, but the Old World, where for century after century, nations had lived and toiled and suffered;—the great teeming, rushing world of men. He longed to mingle in their struggle, to measure his strength with theirs. He had an insatiable longing to

know the mysteries of learning and of art. Better, thought he, to be lost amid the shifting sands of an Egyptian desert, where yet might be found the mystic symbols of ages long past, and the pictured story of a great people who had left imperishable records; better be alone among the tombs of the dead, than here where no human foot, save that of the roaming savage, ever trod.

But now this hope seemed further off than ever; and as he recalled the events of the past week, nothing but his indomitable will and the buoyancy of youth, gave him courage to brave the future.

His father, a hard working man who had received some education, had once owned a store in a small town among the hills of New Hampshire; but he was a man not destined to prosper in business. Completely discouraged by many failures, he finally moved West, with his wife and two little boys, and settled in the unbroken wilderness. Here with his own hands he cut down the trees and built their log-cabin. Then he and his wife planted corn and wheat on the rich, wild land, still full of stumps.

As soon as his sons were able, the father set

them at work, and little of the freedom and merry sport of childhood came to their lot. Their mother had been a district school teacher in the East. She was a woman of refinement, and also of considerable artistic taste, which in different circumstances might have developed into decided talent. But following the dictates of her heart rather than of her judgment, she had married a man for whom she willingly sacrificed every ambition, and had persistently blinded her eyes to the knowledge that he was by far her inferior.

By the fitful light of a pine torch she taught her boys to read. George, the younger, early showed that he had inherited all his mother's intense love for nature and her taste for drawing; and she took great pains to encourage these impulses, trusting some day to see her own baffled hopes realized in her son.

But the strain of pioneer life was too severe and she died early, leaving her little family when they seemed to need her most. The father struggled on a few years longer, then followed her. George and his brother John continued to live in the little cabin, and as a settlement gradually grew up around them,

George went to school in winter and toiled hard in summer, hoping to earn enough to go to the East for a college education.

John, however, inherited his father's imprudent qualities and lost all their little property by an unwise speculation. Their home fell into the hands of strangers; and John determined to join some land hunters and go further west. George saw that consumption had already fastened upon his brother, and resolved to follow him. While they were in the forest a severe storm brought on a crisis of the disease, and in a short time George buried his brother under an old oak. Then he was left alone in the world.

This May evening he had ridden beyond his rough companions, and as he viewed from his lofty perch the boundless prairie, he felt like one ship-wrecked in mid-ocean. But suddenly the profound silence about him was broken by a woman's shrill, angry voice, calling, "Ann, Ann, whar are ye? How dare ye keep me waitin' so, you lazy, good-for-nothin' hussy! you'll catch it this time." The words were followed by the sound of sharp blows, mingled with a child's piteous screams.

George sprang from his seat as if the rod had fallen upon his own shoulders. To descend the tree was the work of a moment, and following the sound of the child's shrieks, he soon saw a low log hut almost buried among the trees. Outside the door stood a tall gaunt woman in a dirty gown which hung loosely about her. One claw-like hand held the rod; the other roughly grasped a little girl, who seemed about ten years old.

George approached unheard, and as another blow was about to descend upon the trembling crouching figure, he tore the rod from the woman's grasp and said indignantly, "Are you a fiend, to beat a little child like that?"

She started back in alarm, but seeing the young hunter, exclaimed in astonishment, "Whar the devil did you come from?"

The little girl also turned her startled eyes upon him. Meeting a look of tender pity she sprang to him, threw herself at his feet and cried, "Save me, save me! don't let her hit me agin!"

Morton lifted her up and put his protecting arms around her as the woman advanced

toward them saying in a loud menacing voice, "Leave that gal o' mine alone. It's none o' yer business how I treat her."

"I'm not her gal. She's no right to treat me so. Don't, oh! don't leave me," screamed the child, clinging to him with passionate energy.

"Whose little girl are you? Where did you come from?" asked George, convinced that her words were true, as he looked into her large dark eyes and thin white face, which would have been beautiful if it had possessed the soft roundness of childhood.

But the woman now glaring at him, said in strident tones as she drew still closer, "Let go that young un, an' move on, you impudent rascal, or you'll git a beatin' yerself;" and suiting her action to the words, she struck him a sharp blow with her fist. George pushed her from him, and catching up the stick with which she had been belaboring the child, stood over her about to strike in return, when a voice arrested him saying, "Hoot, hoot, lad-die; are ye fechtin' wi' a woman?"

Ashamed of his passionate impulse, young Morton stepped back and replied with a deep

flush, "This inhuman wretch has been beating the poor little girl almost to death."

"Ay, ay, we saw her layin' it on the wee lass, an' blow me, if she touches her again I'll gie her a taste o' my ain fist," replied a short, red-headed Scotchman.

Seeing so many strangers the woman looked sullenly up and said, "The gal's jus' makin' out she's hurt cause you've come."

"Na, na, ye canna fule us like that. We ha'rd her screams half a mile awa'. Wheer's the mon that owns this cabin?"

"Hello! what's the row now," called a voice from behind. Turning they saw a large square-shouldered man, with features coarse but good natured in expression. "How are ye, strangers?" he asked, as he came up and greeted them with a hearty shake of the hand. "Which way are ye travelin'?"

"We're followin' the trail to Fort Dearborn," replied the old Scotchman. "My name is Malcolm Grant, an' this is Sandy, me brither. The lad is George Morton, a freend o' ourn. As nicht is coomin' on, what say ye to our campin' here till the morn'?"

"I'll be powerful glad to have ye, fer visit-

ors is an uncommon treat in this wilderness. Jist hopple yer critters an' turn 'em loose. Martha, here's a lot o' prairie chickens. Give us a big supper now, quick as ye kin."

But at this point his wife, placing her arms akimbo, said with dogged obstinacy, "Look here, Bracy, if ye think I'm goin' to cook wittles fer them cussed strangers, what's been callin' a decent, respectable woman every dirty name they could lay their tongue to, yer mighty mistaken."

The words, however, were scarcely spoken when her husband laid his strong hand upon her shoulder, and turning her toward the cabin door, said with quiet authority, "None o' yer tantrums, ole gal; remember I'm boss o' this shanty. I'll give ye an hour till supper, an' thar'll be four hungry men to eat it."

She yielded to the inevitable with a scowling face, but went to work vigorously, and he knew his command would be obeyed. Meanwhile he guided his visitors to a large fallen log where they all sat down, and with the freedom of pioneer life exchanged their experiences in various wanderings through the wilderness. Finally Malcolm said, "Weel noo, folks in the

settlements tell me that Fort Dearborn is the place to settle; they say it's goin' to be a big town some day."

"That's jist a speckilator's yarn," replied their host indignantly. "It's nothin' but a mis'erable swamp. Who's fool enough to go thar when miles and miles o' this rich prairie kin be had for nothin'? I tell you, strangers, you never seed the beat o' this land. Jist put in yer corn, an' you'll have a whoppin' crop in no time. S'pose you stop here; thar's plenty of room. I allers did like good honest neighbors, an' I hain't knocked around the world so long not to know 'em when I see 'em. My wife never could get along in the settlements; her elbows are purty sharp, an' was allers hittin' somebody; made me sich a heap o' trouble I brought her whar she could have full swing."

Looking up with a keen glance, he saw that his visitors thoroughly understood his domestic relations and added: "As you've no women-folks among ye to raise a row, I think we might jine forces and work to some profit."

The Grants remained thoughtful for a time, then Sandy asked, in a sharp voice, "Wheer's yer market?"

"Wal, thar's a United States fort about twenty miles from here, an' they's took all I had to sell. It's far to team I know, but that we must expect."

Malcolm turned to young Morton and asked how he liked the plan. He thought well of it, for he had become so interested in the little girl, who now called them in to supper, that he was anxious to tarry and see more of her.

After the meal the men resumed their former seat and continued to discuss their plans. George left them there, and wandered off to an old log by the well where he could look out upon the open prairie. He saw a small stream winding for miles through it, distinctly marked by the shrubs and low trees lining its banks. He heard the mournful notes of a whip-poor-will in the forest, and his thoughts went back to the lonely groves he had left so far behind. He was roused from his sad reverie by the little girl coming up and laying her hand confidingly in his, and saying, with a look of implicit trust, "Oh! I'm so glad you're goin' to stay! You'll never let that bad woman beat me again, will you?"

"Not if I can help it, little Ann," he replied, as he drew her to his lap.

"My name is Marian, not Ann."

"Marian what?"

"Oh! I don't know. I can't tell."

"Can't you tell me how you came to be with these folks?"

"No," she said, with a sad, bewildered look. "It's all so strange! Sometimes I think I remember, then I think I'm jus' dreamin', as I do nights. But even then the name they allers used to call me was Marian, an' I'm sure that woman ain't no relation o' mine if she does say so."

Kissing her, and smoothing the brown curls from her low brow, he said with a smile, "Tell me what you dream."

But once more that harsh voice called, bidding her come in and go to bed.

CHAPTER II.

A CHILD'S STORY.

THE following day Malcolm Grant went with Mr. Bracy to visit the fort. On his return he said to his brother and young Morton, that if they agreed he would settle on the prairie; for the commander at the fort had agreed to take all they could bring, either in crops or furs. The pay offered was small, but it could be relied upon.

His brother and George gave ready consent, and the next day they began to turn over the prairie sod for their first planting of corn. Several weeks of hard work followed. During this time George had little chance to befriend the poor child who had so won upon his sympathy. Yet with scarcely repressed indignation he witnessed the harsh treatment and labor beyond her years, put upon her by Martha Bracy. When the men were present she was

obliged to restrain her violent temper; but many a time while following the plow, George heard the screams of the child under her blows.

Before long he discovered the only vulnerable point in Martha's character. It was love for her baby. By showing great appreciation of his healthy growth and resemblance to herself, he gradually obtained favors which others sought in vain. Sometimes he would take her boy out where they were at work, and of course Marian must go to watch and wait upon him. In the sweet quiet air the child slept for hours, and George made a bed for him under the trees, thus freeing Marian from care. She spent this time wandering here and there, gathering wild flowers; or throwing herself down in the long grass she would listen to the dreamy hum of bees amid the fragrant blossoms above her, through which she could catch glimpses of the deep blue sky. At such times there came over her a vague memory of tropical foliage, of broad-petaled flowers, of a land of perpetual sunshine where her need of love and heart hunger was satisfied; then suddenly brought back to her hard tasks, she would throw herself upon

the ground and give way to passionate weeping.

When George would urge her to tell him what she could remember of her former history, she always replied, with the same bewildered manner:

"I ain't sure o' any thing. P'r'aps it'll all come back some day."

After the Grant brothers had finished planting their crops they decided to build a log hut. Those were pleasant days to Morton, lopping the branches and shaping the logs under the cool shadows.

But one day he begged a holiday for Marian, and Martha, mollified by a present of some fine venison, graciously gave consent. The child passed a long happy morning in the woods, and when noon came, wandered away with George to a soft mossy seat. After they had finished their lunch, she looked up in his face, and said, "I think I can tell you whar I come from now."

Putting his arm around her, he said, "Tell me every thing you even fancy you remember."

"While I've been lyin' on this moss I

seemed to be playing in a garden with a boy littler than me, who I'm sure was my brother. We did not talk as I do now. I can't remember how the words did sound. I've never heard words like 'em since. I think I'd know 'em if I should."

"I am sorry I can only speak English," said George. "But do you remember your father?"

"I just remember a tall man with whiskers. He used to take me on his shoulders and run through the garden. Mamma chased him and hit him with flowers. Oh! the lots of kisses she used to give me. I never had no more kisses till the night you came."

"What was your papa's name?"

"Maria called him Milord: do you know any such name?"

George sadly shook his head; but the child suddenly starting up, cried, "I see it all now. Papa and mamma came to the room where Carlo and me were playin' an' said they was goin' away, an' mamma kissed us an' cried an' cried till papa took her from us. Bime by Maria said papa wanted us to come to him. So we rode in a wagon, I don't know how far, but I remember the ocean was on one side of the

road, an' Maria said we were goin' on it in a ship. But first we came to a big city, an' went into a house whar lots of folks was runnin' in and out. It was fun for Carlo and me to stan' in the winder an' watch 'em. Pretty soon Maria said she saw a man she knowed, and run down to talk to him. When she come back she said she was goin' out a bit an' we mustn't leave that room.

"While she was gone, some men come by makin' music, an' when they got past the winder, we run down to the door to hear more, an' as they went round the corner we followed on an' on, till they stopped playin'. Then I tried to find the big house agin, but we was lost. Then a man stopped us, an' said he'd take us back to Maria.

"He took Carlo up and we went on till he come to a big ship on the water. He put us in it, an' I cried when I found Maria wasn't there, but he said he'd throw me in the water if I didn't stop.

"The ship sailed away, an' soon we was so sick! I remember Carlo died, an' I seemed to die too, for I don't remember any more till one day I woke up lyin' on a heap of straw in a

low, dirty room, whar no sunshine come. Who I was an' how I come thar I couldn't tell. A man and woman come an' looked at me, an' she give me something to eat. I got better, and some time after I could sit up and walk a little, he brought Uncle Bracy an' Aunt Martha. They looked at me and talked together, an' after awhile Uncle Bracy gave the man some money, an' Aunt Martha took hold of my hand and made me go along with her.

"I was glad to see the sun an' green trees, but couldn't think what had happened to me or how I came there, my head felt so queer all the time. We stopped at last at a little town, an' I was taken way up to a garret, in a house whar lots o' families lived. It was summer, an' sich a hot room! The woman asked Aunt Martha who I was, an' she said I was her sister's child, but I knowed I wasn't, though she made me call her aunt. Thar I had to work till I was so tired, an' my head ached so I only wanted a chance to sleep.

"Aunt Martha an' the other women were allers fightin'. We kept movin', an' every whar she said I was her niece till I began to think I was. At last we come here, an' when I saw

the prairie I thought o' the ocean, an' I wasn't so sure I'd allers lived this way. This happy day has made me see it all just as I've told you. Don't you believe you could find my papa and mamma for me now?"

She looked up with eager, hopeful eyes, as she added, "I don't know when I was lost. It seems a great while ago, but I'm only a little girl."

With an aching heart Morton had listened to her story, hoping to find some clew by which to trace her origin. But the child's recollections were too vague. In that wilderness, with perhaps thousands of miles between them and her parents, what chance had he of finding the missing links?

Marian read too well his face, and, springing up, with flashing eyes, cried, "Must I allers live here? allers be beaten? allers be that bad woman's slave? I'll run away. I'd rather live with the rattlesnakes in the woods, or be eaten up by wolves: What have I done? It's wicked, it's cruel to treat me so."

Then the mood which had braced her for a moment with its bitter power passed. Her eyes lost their fire, her little bony arms hung

down, so tired, so hopeless, as she moaned,
“What shall I do? oh! what shall I do? Why
does that woman abuse me so?” Alas, poor
little Marian!

CHAPTER III.

A VISIT TO THE FORT.

MORTON resolved to tell Marian's story to Malcolm Grant and seek his advice. Malcolm had a rough outside, but it covered a warm heart and much shrewd common sense. When George spoke of Marian's early surroundings, and the grief of her parents at such a loss, Malcolm passed his hard hand hastily over his eyes, and finally said in a broken voice: "The puir wee lassie! It makes me hert sair, an' me Scotch bluid bile whin I see niggers bought an' sold; but to kidnap an' sell sic a delicate leetle bairn, hoot, mon! the deil himsel cudna hae done worse. An' for an auld hag like Martha to hae the bringin' up o' the lass! Is there no way we kin flyte upon Martha an' win the bairn back to her ain hame?"

"I've already tried to buy her from Mrs. Bracy, but she won't give her up. She gets too much work out of the child. You know I

intend to go East as soon as I can. I mean to take Marian with me. I am working now day and night for that purpose. I am going to make every effort to find her parents, and I'll never part with her unless at their request."

"Ay, ay, laddie, I'm blithe to see ye are no longer so tryste. I kenned richt weel that the bit bairn had won yer hert. She's pale an' weakly noo; but she'll grow into a bonny woman, an' make ye a lovin' wife some o' these days. Truly that's more likely than finding her relations."

George's face flushed as he said, "I'll not deny that I've thought of such a possibility. But, Malcolm, she was born for a better lot, and ought to be fitted for it. Is there nothing we can do now to restore her to her friends? What sort of man is the commander at the fort?"

"Weel, weel, that's warth considerin'. Captain Haywood may seem a bit cold and stern. But theer is a look in his een helps me think he's a hert hid awa' beneath his gay trappins'. Coom down wi' me the next time I carry the corn, an' tell him all about the bairn. He may win some way out we canna get at."

Several weeks passed after this conversation before the corn was ready to be sold ; but one beautiful day in October the men started, walking through the forest paths beside their loaded horses. The shadows grew long before their journey ended. The fort stood on a high hill in the midst of the surrounding woods, and at its base wound a clear stream, in which the green slopes of the ramparts were distinctly reflected.

None but the sentinels walking their beats were visible as the men sought admission. The soldier on guard at the entrance carried their message, and in a short time they were ushered into the commander's presence.

Young Morton did not present a very attractive appearance at this time. His trowsers were of coarse blue jean, and were far out-grown. His hunting-shirt of the same material, was patched here and there, and the sleeves displayed a considerable portion of his arms. A cap of gray squirrel skin with the bushy tail for a tassel, covered his mass of long black hair. But he met the officer with a rude dignity, and such earnestness and intelligence were manifested in his countenance that Captain

Haywood was strongly impressed in his favor.

"Well, young man, what can I do for you?" he asked, in a tone of interest.

"I have nothing to ask for myself, sir. But I have found upon the edge of the prairie, a little girl who has been kidnapped from her parents and is now held by a squatter's wife in cruel bondage. From what the child can remember, I should think her father was a nobleman; but her memory has been so impaired by suffering that she can give no clew to his name or country."

George then gave a full account of Marian's story as she had told it to him, and afterward drew such a strong picture of the child's present life, as completely to win the sympathy of his listener.

Captain Haywood remained thoughtful for some time after George ceased speaking. Finally he said, "I have a cousin in New York who married a Mr. Van Zandt. I will write to her about the child, and see if any trace of her parents can be found there. It is possible, if they can not discover her relatives, that they may consent to adopt her themselves. They

have lately lost their only child. Should they take the little girl, she will have a beautiful home, and every advantage that wealth and refinement can give. You think Bracy might be induced by money considerations to part with her?"

"Ay, ay, he kens the warth o' money, an' is sharp for a bargain. But it's wi' that ill-woman Martha, ye'll have the claver. Mony's the time I've ached to gie her jist a taste o' me ain fists, when I've heerd her a-thrashin' the puir wee lassie, whiles I dinna ken but she'd thrash me the first. Still, Bracy's boss in his ain cabin whin he sets out, howsoever he were fule enough to be yoked wi' sic an auld hag."

"Old bachelors like you and me can't understand such folly, Malcolm," said the captain, laughing. "But what do you say to my plan?"

"It's just what we were seckin', ay, George?"

But George could hardly command himself to answer. Certainly it was the best solution of his question; yet he did not realize how little he had anticipated the possibility of parting with Marian.

He had woven many glorious day-dreams in which he saw her a beautiful maiden, restored

by his own hands to her parents, and he, having fought his way to wealth and fame, claiming her from them as his wife, her heart as truly his then, as now, when she clung to him her only refuge from cruel blows.

"Whist, mon ! I forgot this might be inter-ferrin' wi' yer plans," said Malcolm, shrewdly reading George's thought.

George flushed painfully as he felt the eyes of the two men fastened upon him, and was obliged to face the reality in contrast with his bright vision.

"May I ask what are your plans?" said the captain.

"I hoped to earn enough soon, to free her myself and adopt her as my own little sister," replied George, frankly.

"But you must see that this proposal of mine will be much more to her advantage, if it can be successfully carried out. Still, you have the first claim. I will do nothing in the matter unless you desire it."

"Thank you, sir. I came here on purpose to find some release for her ; and if you can secure her such a home and a mother's care, I would not be selfish enough to stand in her way."

"Then I will write to my cousin, and in a week we send dispatches East. But we can not look for an answer very soon. So you had better say nothing of the project to the child, or to those who now claim her. But, young man," he added, looking at George with keen observation, "it seems to me the life of a trapper is not the one for you. Have you no higher ambition?"

"Yes, sir, to get an education."

"Out in this wilderness? Pray how do you intend to accomplish it?" asked the captain, with a slightly ironical smile.

"Circumstances compelled me to come here, when I hoped to have gone East to fit myself for college. But I do not regret it since I have found that poor child. Meanwhile, I am trying to earn all I can, and am studying during my leisure hours."

Involuntarily George's eyes turned longingly upon some well-filled book shelves that lined one side of the room. Captain Haywood noticed the glance, and said, "An education is a fine thing, but only a stepping stone to something beyond. To what profession do you aspire?"

George hesitated, and again felt the painful

color mounting to his brows; but looking up with a proud consciousness of power to accomplish his purpose, replied quietly, "My ambition is to become an artist."

Captain Haywood now regarded him with a look half contemptuous, half amused, as he said :

"Pooh, pooh, young man! you've made a silly choice. Your head gives token that you've brains enough to be something more than a dauber in paints and oils. Better learn my art and use those muscular limbs fighting for your country."

"I should, sir, if it was now needed in a just cause. But to spend my days exterminating the original possessors of this land, when there's room and to spare for all, is a work to which I feel no calling."

The officer's face flushed, but he laughed as he said, "Wait till you've had a little experience of Indian courtesy; then see how you like them for neighbors."

But quickly recovering from his annoyance, he said, "If you don't care to be a soldier, how would you like to study law? I don't know but I could give you a lift in that direction. This

Mr. Van Zandt is a prosperous New York lawyer, and I might induce him to allow you to read in his office when you are ready."

Here was a strong temptation, for George saw that it offered a chance of remaining near Marian, should she find a home in this family. But after a pause, he said earnestly, "I am very much obliged to you, sir, yet doubt if I can accept your generous offer. A man must follow the bent of his mind if he would succeed. From my earliest childhood I have had this desire to become an artist. My mother had unusual talent for drawing, and taught me all she could before her death. This was her ambition as well as mine. And now," he added, as his voice trembled with suppressed emotion, "I feel that I must try to succeed for her sake. If I enter the lists, I shall strive for the highest place. I believe no one requires a more liberal education, and especially in the classics, than a true artist. I mean to secure that first. Then if I find I have not the genius to execute my conceptions; if I can be no more than a mere dauber or copyist, I shall have prepared myself for other fields of labor."

His dark eyes flashed as he spoke, and uncon-

sciously drawing up his form to its full height he looked at the officer almost defiantly, expecting to meet again his ironical smile.

But Captain Haywood had watched him with increasing respect and admiration. He was a man past fifty; but as he looked at the young man before him, some of his early day dreams came back, and he thought sadly of the bitter disappointments which experience had brought him.

A lonely man far out in that wilderness—who would mourn his loss should he any day fall a victim to Indian treachery, and his gray hairs hang as a trophy at some savage belt? Yet surely it was well to aim high, even if one fell far short of the mark. His experience with men enabled him to discern in this young frontiersman with his uncouth dress, a strong character and a mind of unusual ability. He believed George would be sure to succeed if he could only have a fair chance. How proud he would be of such a son! Help him he must in some way, and who could tell what influence he might be able to exert over his destiny? So, lifting his eyes from the floor where he had let them rest during this long

reverie, he said, "I believe you are right in saying a man must choose that for which he is best qualified, though it often takes time to find out what that is, and sometimes the knowledge comes too late. But an education is the first step. I suppose you haven't many books at your command now. If any thing upon these shelves will aid you, it is at your service. So step up and look them over."

George tried to stammer out his thanks, but a glance at his expressive face revealed more plainly than words, the joy, the deep gratitude this kindness awoke. He had never before seen a copy of Shakespeare or Milton, and now that he was allowed to take back with him those richest treasures of the English language, he felt as if he had suddenly found a mine of gold.

He returned to their log hut in buoyant spirits, believing that at last his feet were firmly planted on the first round of the ladder of fame, which he felt perfectly confident of his ability to climb.

CHAPTER IV.

THE ESCAPE.

AFTER this visit several weeks slipped by almost unnoticed. October, with its ever shifting kaleidoscope, had changed the forest each day with new tints of beauty ; but the autumn winds had gradually stripped the great trees of their summer's wealth, and under a somber November sky they stretched out their bare arms, with only here and there a yellow leaf ; while on the prairie, the long waves of grass rolled dull and brown, that in June had been of emerald green, brilliant with flowers.

It was under such a sky that young Morton started out to visit his traps, which he had set for game at some distance from the cabins. Marian accompanied him, with Mrs. Bracy's consent, granted on the condition that she should have a liberal share in the game. This was one of Marian's happy mornings. She trotted along by George's side, her dark eyes

radiant, her cheeks glowing under the stiff little sunbonnet, the long cape of which reached almost to the top of her boots. But neither thought how quaint was the figure she presented. She had given all the long repressed love of her little heart, to this young man, who treated her with the care and tenderness of an elder brother; but who was still young enough to enter into many of her joys, recalling the time when the flowers and bird notes gave him the same childlike fancies.

Yet his greatest delight was to see her mind waking up from the long torpor of her life of hardship; and he was astonished at the avidity with which she seized upon all knowledge that came within her comprehension. He often told her stories from the books he had read; but as he described the valiant deeds of men who had suffered for their faith or their country, they always had on the child's mind the face, the form of the one so close beside her.

He loved to tell her also of his own hopes for the future—how he was going to Europe some day to learn to paint beautiful pictures, and how he would win fame, and how she should go with him, and perhaps they would find her

parents and early home. She would look up with loving, trustful eyes which saw in him already the greatest artist that ever lived.

The sun was past the meridian when they turned toward home, with a plentiful supply of small game. Not a sound broke the perfect stillness of the prairie save their own merry voices. Suddenly Marian exclaimed, "Oh look! there are some men on horse-back. See! they are coming this way. Who can they be?"

George instantly ran to a little rise of ground, and after watching the distant figures a few moments, returned to Marian and said: "I am afraid they are Indians. We must hide ourselves at once among these tall weeds. They won't see us, yet we can tell which way they are going. I fear they will attack our friends if they come this way."

"Yes," he added, in great excitement, "they are making a bee line for our cabins. Oh! if I could only give them warning."

"Let's run back quick," cried Marian, attempting to rise.

"No, no, don't stir. To show ourselves now would be sure death. It's no use. I haven't my gun. I can't do any thing but keep you hid,"

he said bitterly, as he threw his arm around the trembling child, while both waited in breathless terror to see what would happen.

In the soft grass the horses' hoofs made no sound. Not far from where they crouched the Indians swept by, like some awful specters, in their fierce war paint. Soon they were close upon their unconscious victims: they swooped down upon them with a wild whoop. A few shots were exchanged; some terrible shrieks rent the air; then all was still.

After a time, cautiously looking through the bushes, George saw the Indians mount their horses and ride away toward the west. He watched them entirely out of sight, and was just thinking whether it would be safe to return and see what had befallen his companions, when a blaze shot up from the roof of Mr. Bracy's house, and in a moment seemed to envelop it. A strong south wind carried the burning cinders to the dry prairie grass, a tongue of fire leaped up, then spread into a broad sheet which came sweeping toward them. George saw that their only chance of escape was to reach and plunge into a stream that wore its deep bed into the rich soil scarcely half a mile

away. He caught Marian in his arms, and bidding her cling close to his neck, ran for the water, while behind them with fearful rapidity came a roaring, tossing tempest of flame. It surged up and down the long billows of land, a moment hidden, then bursting out still nearer. He hears its crackling, the smoke almost blinds his eyes. "Will it rush in between him and the stream!" he asks himself, in an agony of fear. No, again it darts forward in the desperate race. On and on he flies. With a shriek of terror Marian hides her face from the fiery blast as it now scorches their clothes and hair. But the stream is won. They plunge into the cool water, and for a moment it closes over their heads; but the next instant, rising to the surface, they saw with astonishment an arch of fire above them, spanning the stream from shore to shore.

But instantly catching the dry grass beyond, it sped forward, and soon the loud crackling showed that the trees were ablaze. After swimming to the bank, both stood for a while spell-bound by the awful scene. The flames had parted, and one line was still sweeping far and wide over the prairie. The other had

mounted the high forest ridge, and catching the lofty trees, converted them into a net work of crimson streams that flashed up the great trunks, and left only black, charred skeletons standing. Like a thing of life the fire darted hither and thither, skurrying along on unbeaten paths, till at last it had traveled out of sight, leaving a scene of desolation behind.

George, feeling the child shiver in her wet garments, roused himself to think what could be done for their own safety. First, he decided to return to their former home. They had to pick their way very carefully over the ground, which was still hot and smoking from the recent fire. When they reached the spot where their cabins had stood, nothing was to be seen but a heap of burning logs and white ashes. Their former associates must have perished in the flames, if any had escaped the Indian massacre.

Marian cried bitterly, her little heart grieving for the baby, and even suffering keen remorse for the hard thoughts she had had of Martha. She felt in some dim way, that she was responsible for the terrible tragedy that had befallen her tyrant.

But George roused her with an exclamation of joy, as he ran toward the well, and laid his hand on old Malcolm Grant who was crouching in the midst of a pile of brush-wood. The old man's head was hidden in his arms, and heavy sobs shook his frame.

"Malcolm, Malcolm, are you hurt?" cried George. With a startled look he gazed at Morton for a moment, than sprang to his feet and rubbing his hands across his eyes, exclaimed: "Whist! laddie! I thought ye were burned up, too. An' if theer isna the bonny wee bairn! Weel, now, I kin stan' the rest, though me brither is gone, an' I'm left as bare o' ony siller as the day I was born."

"How did you escape?" asked George, while Marian threw her arms around the old man's neck, and sobbed with mingled grief and joy.

"Theer, theer; dinna greet ony mair, me dainty. The days o' your bondage are past," he whispered in a husky voice, as he pressed his rough beard against her soft cheek. "Wad ye ken how I won me way frae those red deevils, lad? I was just on this spot when I hair'd their screech, an' afore I could think what to do, I saw me brither fall wi' a blow from a toma-

hawk. I hadna a weepon nigh me. I kenned I cudna help him, so I just slippit underneath this brush heap, while, expectin' every minute wad be me deith ; but they didna coom this way. Mr. Bracy shot one, an' if iver that auld vixen made good use of her fists it were the day. Hoot, mon ! I felt like gein' her a cheer for every blow, an' I ken the ears of mony o' them deevilish thieves are stingin' yet. Ye may think I micht o' coom to her help, but it war no use agin so mony. They were soon put out o' their misery, an' the Injins, after helpin' themsels to all they cud find, set fire to the cabins and rode awa'. The wind carried the fire frae me, but whan I crap out o' the brush, an' saw the twa cabins in a blaze, an' the flames chasin' like lightnin' across the prairie, I was sure you and the lassie wad be burned up too, an' I wished sair that I'd perished wi' ye. Hoo did ye win yer way out o' that sea o' fire, laddie ? "

Morton told of their narrow escape, and afterward asked Malcolm what they should do.

"We must gang to the fort at once. We'll make a cheer o' some o' this wood for the

bairn to sit on, whiles we carry her atween us. It's a weary way, an' may be we canna win the fort afore nicht, but we maun gang as far frae here as we can. Jist haul up the bucket full o' water for a partin' drink, then lat me use the rope to bind the cheer."

This was done. The two men worked rapidly for an hour. A comfortable seat was thus prepared for Marian, who meanwhile had been lying by a fire gathered from the smoldering logs. Here she had dried her wet garments, and, overcome by excitement and fatigue, slept as peacefully as if violence and bloodshed had never marred the spot.

It was a very tedious walk to the fort. Their horses had either been captured by the Indians or had perished in the flames. The fire had obliterated all trace of the trail, and they were obliged to work their way with difficulty through the still smoldering trunks to the further side of the burned district, and then make a long search ere they again found the track. The sun went down while they were still far from the fort. Marian was crying with fatigue and hunger, so Malcolm said they must stop and camp for the night.

They had come to a little sheltered dell, where two or three fallen trees at the head of a slope formed a natural barricade. Malcolm made a bed of sweet ferns and dried leaves for Marian, and wrapped her in his own thick coat, while George went foraging for the party.

He came upon a flock of wild turkeys, and ere they escaped succeeding in killing one. Quite elated with his success he returned and built a fire, while Malcolm prepared their supper. A spring also was found whose crystal waters gushed over a little hillock of green moss, and were easily caught in the tin cup Morton had carried with him when starting for their trip in the morning that now seemed so long ago.

Darkness had hardly settled over the forest before the moon rose and mounted full and clear. But when it was poised over head, its rays could only shimmer down here and there through the thick boughs. Soon the plaintive notes of the whip-poor-will mingled with the screech of owls, while the wolves, howling and fighting one another gathered about their camp, held at bay by the blazing fire.

After supper George said he would watch

while Marian and Malcolm slept. For several hours he succeeded in keeping his senses alert and heard every sound that rose from the forest ; but the fatigue of the day had been so great that he gradually passed from dreamy reverie to sound sleep.

The sun was shining in his eyes when he awoke. He started to his feet in alarm, and seeing Malcolm leaning over a fire cooking the remains of the turkey for breakfast, he came up, and said in a mortified tone, "I deserve to be shot for sleeping at my post. I see I shall never do for a soldier."

"Pooh, pooh, laddie ! nature will have her revenge. Ye canna work all day an' watch all night. I didna expect it, an' war sleepin' wi' one eye open, as all trappers do. Coom noo, wake the bairn. Lat's eat an' be goin'. Wha kens hoo near them red deevils may be ? I prefare to keep me scalp safe on me ain head, so we'll put as mony miles atween us and them as possible."

In an hour more they arrived safely at the fort, and were kindly welcomed by Captain Haywood, and assigned to comfortable quarters.

CHAPTER V.

CAPTAIN HAYWOOD'S OFFER.

A FEW weeks after Morton's arrival he was summoned to Captain Haywood's room, and found him engaged with various letters and military dispatches that a messenger had just brought from the East.

Motioning the young man to a seat near him the captain said, " I have received a reply to the letter I sent Mr. and Mrs. Van Zandt. As I hoped, they are deeply interested in the child's history, and say they will use every means to trace her parents ; and they also offer to adopt her if her former home can not be found. Mr. Van Zandt writes that he is exceedingly glad of this proposal, as it may rouse his wife from brooding over the loss of their only boy. He wishes to have Marian removed from these squatters, and sent on by a safe escort at once. The Indians have relieved us from any trouble on their account. But I hear the child has

taken a heavy cold from her exposure that day, I doubt if she can endure such a journey at this season of the year. What do you think?"

Captain Haywood noticed with pity the look of suffering in Morton's face—suffering that blanched his very lips, but found no expression save in the tightly clinched hands, and a pained look in his eyes as he raised them to reply. As a drowning man catches at straws, George now snatched at the hope of keeping Marian near him a little longer, and said :

"It is a very long and wearisome journey from this wilderness to New York. Would it not be better to wait till spring before she goes? She will have a chance to get strong and develop, in this restful, healthy life. They will see her to much better advantage, and be more likely to give her a daughter's place in their hearts and home."

"I believe you are right, George," replied the captain; "and I have another reason for agreeing to your proposal. I have received letters which inform me that in the spring I shall be removed from this post to the fort at West Point on the Hudson."

"Indeed!" said Morton, looking up with sur-

prise. "That is a very desirable change, sir ; is it not ?"

"Yes," said Haywood, with a flush of pride and pleasure. "I have here a letter from my friend Colonel Alexander Hamilton. I was a subordinate under his command during our last war. His recommendation to His Excellency President Washington, has obtained for me this honorable appointment. The transfer will not be made till April. I could take Marian with me then, and feel assured that she either finds her parents or is secure of a happy home with Madge Van Zandt."

"Now, as to your plans, Morton," he added, after a pause. "I will agree to pay you as I do Malcolm for every cord of wood you cut. I would also like to employ you sometimes as my secretary. But—see here, George, I have a proposal to make to you—if you will give up your silly idea of studying art, and the notion of spending the most of your life abroad, and if you will read law as I proposed with Mr. Van Zandt, I will furnish you with the means of acquiring your education. I'll do more ; I will adopt you as my son ; have you take my name. I am a lonely man with plenty of

means, and have it in my power to advance your interests in every way. You have great ability and great ambition. Who knows? You may yet achieve distinction as one of our most eminent statesmen."

George clasped the captain's hand, and his voice trembled with intense feeling, as he said: "Dear sir, how can I thank you for your noble, generous offer! If the devoted affection of a son can satisfy you, it is yours. But I must give more thought to your proposal. The decision of one's life work can not be hastily made."

"Take as long as you wish, my boy. I will excuse you now."

George went out like one walking in a dream. He felt that he must be alone; so taking his gun and powder flask, he started for a long tramp. At first he walked rapidly, to work off his excitement and be able to think calmly. He saw all the advantages to be obtained from Captain Haywood's offer.

Instead of a life of toil and privation, a long struggle to win a name as an artist with perhaps failure after all, here was every difficulty smoothed from his path, an apparently open

door to wealth and fame, and a chance to remain near Marian, who was growing dearer every day—becoming more and more the one being around whom all his heart strings most closely twined. Surely it was wisest, best to accept the captain's generous offer. He was twenty years old; he had had a long battle with adverse circumstances. He might now devote his whole time to study, without the interruptions of labor which had so broken into the years before.

But could he spend his life studying the petty technicalities of the law, disputing over deeds and boundaries? Still, there was much that was grand in the profession. There was justice to be maintained; there were the wronged, the oppressed, to be defended. He need not undertake a cause unless he believed it to be right.

But, again, if he accepted the captain's offer, was he not losing his independence, binding himself to obligations he might not be able to fulfill? Captain Haywood was a man yet in the vigor of life. He was going into new and more active scenes. He might form other ties, and this generous offer become a source of

regret, a burden upon him. George possessed a sturdy, self-reliant character, which all the circumstances of his life hitherto had helped to develop. He now felt that if he accomplished any thing, it must be on that basis. His thoughts returned to Marian, and he believed that no trace of her parents could be found in America, and that Mr. Van Zandt would take little pains to search elsewhere. Possibly if he carried out his purpose to study art in Europe, he might also discover her early home.

He had reached a crisis when a decision must be made. The temptation placed before him was very great. For hours he paced the forest paths absorbed by conflicting thoughts. Finally he reached a part of the woods where the stream he had been following flowed through high banks, reflecting the trees in its perfect mirror. Here he sat down, and in memory went over all the events of his life. He thought of the time when his mother first taught him to draw the picture of a tree. He remembered looking from the doorstep of their log-cabin, up into the hoary limbs of a giant oak towering above them with its fretwork of delicate foliage against the blue sky, and he could even then

recall the gnarled forms of those intricate branches which his baby fingers were attempting to trace, while his mother's loving smile shone down into his heart like glowing sunbeams, as she called him her darling artist boy.

And so all through his childhood that hope, that ambition had been fostered, and had urged him on. Could he forsake this ideal, give up his hopes, and abandon the work to which his mother had dedicated him so early?

He was like an eaglet that men had captured and sought to hold down upon the lower plains, while he heard the voices of his companions calling him from the eyry on the dizzy heights. What matter if storm clouds gathered thick and dark around those lonely crags? what matter if he should have to beat his weary wings against tempest and baffling winds? His nature commanded him to fly upward.

CHAPTER VI.

THE NEW HOME.

WHEN Captain Haywood asked Morton for his decision, he gave it frankly but firmly, yet in a manner that showed how deeply grateful he felt for the offer. At first the captain was very angry, and for some time made George feel that he had forfeited all his regard through his so-called foolish obstinacy. He resolved, however, to say no more until George had seen something of the world, hoping that then he would reconsider his decision.

The winter passed rapidly away. As George had anticipated, the child in her restful, happy surroundings, developed all the beauty her first appearance had promised. The little face became rosy with health and dimpled with merry smiles, and her limbs rounded into the symmetry of perfect childlike grace. She became also the pet of the whole garrison, but her devotion to George grew stronger each day,

and she was not happy unless she could follow him to the woods, or sit on a little bench by his side when he was busy with his studies.

It was a terrible ordeal for George when the time came to tell her of the new home awaiting her. At first she positively refused to hear of it, and was reconciled only by the knowledge that George also was going to leave the fort to enter an Eastern college, and that this would compel her to be separated from him, no matter where she was.

Captain Haywood finally persuaded George to accept enough money to defray his educational expenses, on the condition that it might be considered a loan, which he could return, meeting the interest meanwhile, and reducing the principal as he was able.

Poor old Malcolm was almost heart-broken as the hour of parting approached, and begged permission to go with them. The captain could not refuse, and Malcolm became his most devoted attendant after he was stationed at West Point.

It was about the middle of May when Captain Haywood and Marian arrived in the city of New York. On landing from the sloop which

had brought them down from West Point, they walked up Broad Street to the corner of New Street, where stood Becker's Tavern, then a place of great resort. There he obtained a conveyance to carry them to his cousin's residence, which at the date of our story was quite out of town, although below the Colliet, a beautiful sheet of fresh water, which has since been filled up to form Canal Street.

Mr. Van Zandt occupied an extensive and elegant manor, which he inherited from his father. The mansion stood upon a high bank overlooking the Hudson. The main building was nearly square, with a great central hall and large rooms opening on each side. The walls were of Holland brick, and the front facing toward the city was highly ornamented. The outer doors, dark as ebony, were divided in halves. The walls of the room were wainscoted, the ceilings were ornamented in arabesque work, while the jambs of the Dutch fire-places were three or four feet deep, and faced with titles bearing scriptural illustrations.

The furniture of the large room into which Marian and the captain were ushered was stiff in form, heavily carved, and dark with age, but to

remove the chill from the lofty apartment a bright fire burned upon the hearth, and blooming plants filled the deep window-seats.

Mrs. Van Zandt, dressed in deep black, was sitting near the fire. Her face was pale, and her eyes had a sad absorbed look. She rose and greeted her cousin cordially, and, taking Marian's hand, stooped down and gave her a kiss, saying she hoped the child would feel that she had now found a home. But Marian's warm heart felt chilled as she looked into the still, impassive face. George had said so much of the tender mother love awaiting her, that Marian expected to be drawn at once into a close embrace.

She followed the strange maid who was summoned to show her to her room, believing she could never be happy there; and if it had not been for the novelty of her surroundings and for her pride, she would have given way to passionate tears.

On returning to the parlor she was presented to her adopted father; a man of commanding presence, with large, dark eyes that at once fascinated the child, and drew her to him with ready confidence.

As he seated her upon his lap, pushed back the brown curls, and studied her sweet face, he said to his wife, "Surely, Madge, you ought to be satisfied with this little daughter Captain Haywood has brought us. To think of finding such a rare flower in the wilderness! From what far clime has she been transplanted, Haywood?"

"That is a question I hoped you would be able to solve," replied the captain.

"I did as you requested. I made every inquiry possible in this city, also in Boston and Philadelphia. I told her story to all our foreign ministers, and requested them to write home to learn if any trace could be found of her parentage, but as yet not the slightest clew has been obtained. You see we don't know what country she came from, nor can we be even sure her Christian name was Marian."

The child had listened to this conversation with intense anxiety, for the thought of finding her parents had never been long absent from her mind. She had come there, believing she would hear at once where they were. Now she sprang to the floor and cried passionately: "My name is Marian, and I know my papa and

mamma are on the other side of the ocean ; George said, Mr. Van Zandt would take me to them. I'd never have left him but for that. I can't, I won't stay here. I must find them. Oh ! Captain Haywood, won't you help me ?" she added, throwing herself in his arms, with uncontrollable grief.

All were startled by this sudden outburst ; Mrs. Van Zandt went up to her and said in a calm, firm voice :

" Hush, Marian ! my child ! don't allow yourself to become so excited."

But Mr. Van Zandt drew her again to his arms, and gently soothing her, said, " Don't cry any more, little one, but listen carefully to what I am going to tell you. I shall still make every effort I can to find your parents ; and by and by I hope to be able to take you to Europe to search there. But meanwhile I want you to feel that this is your home. We will love you as our own little daughter, and will give you teachers so you can learn all about those countries we will visit. Can't you wait patiently and give us a little of your love ?"

Marian was naturally grateful for any kind-

ness. She threw her arms around his neck and begged for forgiveness for having been so rude and naughty. A new impulse had been given her, in the thought of obtaining an education. She had a double incentive; the one, Mr. Van Zandt had suggested, and the other, a desire to learn all she could, so that George would not be ashamed of her. By and by when he went to study in Europe she was going to keep house for him. That was sure to come whether Mr. Van Zandt ever took her or not; and as he was not going right away she would rather wait till George was ready. But she could not tell them this hope; she could only thank them with grateful eyes, and resolve that while they did so much for her, she would be loving and good.

The hard discipline which Marian had received from those years of bondage, had made her precocious; and with her imaginative, passionate nature, she lived in a double world, one of day dreams and one of reality; the outward facts often coming in bitter conflict with the inner vision, which became to her fancy so real, yet so beautiful. She could not give it up without a struggle. This trait had added to

the suffering of that period in one way, but had lightened it in another, by enabling her to escape into a world of her own whenever the burden was lifted.

After an early tea Mr. Van Zandt proposed that they should all go up to the roof, which was surrounded by a heavy balustrade, the platform commanding a grand view. On one side of the house was a large square garden filled with rare flowers. On the other an old orchard, with the apple-trees in full bloom; while the lawn, shaded by tall maples and elms, sloped gradually down to the water. Across the river, where now stands a compact city, were to be seen picturesque hills and villages, thorny dells and rocky steeps. Down the beautiful bay lay Governor's Island with its fortifications, the green heights of Brooklyn, then scarcely more than a village, and the wooded shores of Staten Island opposite, narrowing the bay to the gate-way through which the commerce of the world was to find an entrance. And in the distance white sails might be seen gleaming in the sunset light, and ships speeding away toward the great wide ocean.

Marian, who had so long been accustomed to the monotony of the prairie, stood entranced with the beauty before her. She was finally aroused by Captain Haywood, who asked her to sing for them some of the songs the soldiers had taught her. She instantly complied with a wild, merry song, such as soldiers' love. Her child-like voice was as sweet and true as the caroling of the spring birds, and with as little thought of effect as they; for she was in fancy following George along the forest paths, or weaving dreams of the time when they would be together again, and wandering in Europe.

"Madge," said Mr. Van Zandt, in an aside to his wife, "that child has a wonderful voice. I am convinced that there is gentle blood flowing in her veins. But it will be no trial to us if we can always keep her as our own. I shall have that voice cultivated by the best masters in the city."

"What became of the young man who found her, captain?" asked Mrs. Van Zandt.

"He has gone to Harvard College. He also was a rare specimen to be found on a Western prairie. I would like to adopt him. But there is in him a vein of obstinate independence, and

at the same time such silly, romantic notions about studying art, that I don't know how our relations will result. I want him to become a lawyer and was going to ask you to let him read law in your office, Mr. Van Zandt."

"Has he any talent as an artist?" asked Van Zandt.

"Well, I don't deny that he has. But I think he would succeed better in the law. Our country is not ready to patronize the fine arts yet; and we have need of good lawyers and statesmen. He will have, when he comes to maturity, as commanding a presence as yourself, and a rich, deep voice."

"He will require unusual talent to compete with the representatives of the New York bar; present company always excepted, you know," said Van Zandt, with a laugh. "There are giants in that profession now. Men like your friend Hamilton, Colonel Burr, John Jay, Livingston, Hoffman and Chief Justice Lansing are now soaring to the meridian of their power. You must go with me to-morrow and witness the trial now pending, where Hamilton and Burr are pitted against each other. You will listen to the most brilliant eloquence, the most

clinging logic, and the deepest and most varied learning you ever heard. Both Hamilton and Burr have a wonderful career before them; and these are days of high political excitement."

"Under whose leadership do you place yourself?"

"O, I am one of Burr's followers! I believe him to have the cooler head, to be the more far-sighted. He will be our next president without doubt."

"I hope not. He seems to me, like Julius Cæsar, too ambitious. I fear his schemes. But to turn to my Western boy. You great men can't live forever, and you must train some younger prophets to receive your fallen mantles. Will you take my *protégé*, if I can induce him to follow out my wishes? He is already deeply in love with his little prairie-flower. I know he hopes to claim her as his own some day. He has a sort of right to her, as he discovered her. And if he is a prosperous lawyer with my name and fortune, you would not object to him for a son-in-law, would you?"

"Really I hardly like to promise my little girl as a wife when I have just secured her as a

daughter," said Van Zandt, laughing. "I certainly should object to a poor unknown artist. But if he has all the talent you ascribe to him, and all the other necessary conditions are fulfilled, I suppose I should have to give it serious consideration. Fortunately some years must elapse before that question needs to be settled, and who knows what the future may bring? Madge, little Marian has gone to sleep while we've been talking. It's time the child was in bed."

But Marian was not asleep, and although her head was resting quietly upon the broad balustrade, every word that had been said had opened a new and bewildering thought to her mind. But she rose when called, bade them good-night, and went to her room. After the maid had left her, she lay wide awake in the soft, white-curtained bed, trying to recall all the conversation and understand what they wanted George to do. That George loved her she did not doubt, and to her childish mind the hope of living with him was all in all. Whether as wife or sister mattered little so long as they were together.

But what grieved her most was that Captain

Haywood and her adoptive father could wish George to give up studying art. She had such implicit faith in his ability to paint the most beautiful pictures the world had ever seen, that it angered her to think they could speak of his doing any thing else. No, indeed ; he must go to Europe, and she was going with him. If Mr. Van Zandt would not give his consent, she would run away ; and George would find her hidden on the ship, just as she used to run off in the forest and hide, while they were at the fort, and the sergeant's wife wanted her to stay at home and learn to sew. George never scolded her when she suddenly jumped out from behind some log, and begged him to let her stay with him all day ; but seemed just as glad as she was, and built a nice fire where she could keep warm, and cook his dinner. So he would feel, when he saw her on board the ship ; and they would sail away—away to those beautiful countries he had told her of so often, and find her father and mother in some palace even more beautiful than the house she was in now ; and her father would buy all the pictures George could paint, and when he went to the woods to sketch, she would always go with him

to cook his dinner. So the child's dreams of the future mingled with dreams of the past, till a deeper unconsciousness stole upon her, and she slept with the perfect rest of youth and health.

CHAPTER VII.

THEY MEET AGAIN.

FOUR years had passed since Marian had come to her city home—years spent mostly with books and music. Mr. Van Zandt gave her a fine harp and piano, and secured for her the best instruction in music that could be obtained. Her love for it made her so diligent that she already possessed a power of execution unusual for her age, and her voice had developed a compass and sweetness that fulfilled all the promise of her childhood. Not less was the early promise fulfilled in the development of her person. One would suppose her to be older than sixteen who should see her that warm summer evening in her simple white dress, with no ornament save the heavy braids of dark hair crowning her tall, slender figure. Her eyes had the same soft, dreamy look as of yore, whenever she lifted the long lashes, which in the presence of strangers drooped timidly.

Mr. and Mrs. Van Zandt were very proud of the beauty and talent of the child of their adoption ; and on this summer evening, as Mr. Van Zandt was expecting some distinguished guests to dinner, he wished Marian to appear with her mother as the young lady of the house. Hitherto on such occasions as these state dinners she had not been present.

In the large cool drawing-room, whose windows looked out on the smooth lawn and flashing river, were gathered that evening, representatives of the most cultivated and aristocratic society of which the city could then boast. There were Mr. and Mrs. John Schuyler, Colonels Hamilton and Burr, Dr. Mitchell, one of the greatest savants of the city, and the venerable John Jay ; also several officers, with their wives, who since the close of the war had settled in New York ;—the gentlemen with powdered curls in front, and black silk queues behind, and lace ruffles and square toed shoes, the ladies with high back combs and stiff brocades.

This company had been invited to meet the courtly Count Du Moustier, the French ambassador.

After Marian had been presented to the guests, she retired as soon as she could to one of the deep window-seats; but here she was joined by Harry Radcliff, a young man of about two and twenty. He was decidedly handsome, with finely cut features, looking all the more aristocratic for the light sprinkling of powder among his short brown curls. He threw himself on the seat beside her, and looked at her from under his well-marked eye-brows with a half admiring, half amused glance, as he said :

“ So, Miss Marian, this is your first formal dinner party. You ought to feel very grateful to me for coming to-night, as I declined an invitation to the theater where I would see the inimitable Harper act Falstaff.”

“ It was kind of you to forego such a pleasure when your life is so devoid of entertainment,” said Marian, archly.

“ Now, Miss Marian, don't be sarcastic. I've been reading law very steadily this past week.”

“ How about the month previous ? ”

“ Oh, that was a sailing expedition which could not be postponed ! Besides a man can be young but once in his life. I know I'm a lazy fellow. I would a great deal rather take you

for a row on the river to-morrow, than spend the morning reading Blackstone in your father's office. Will you go with me?" he asked, bending eagerly toward her.

"No, thank you, I have something to do if you haven't."

"You always have something to prevent me from enjoying your society," said the young man reproachfully. "Come, reconsider that decision. It will be charming on the water now, and I'll teach you how to use the oars."

"I can not encourage such a waste of your precious time," said Marian, blushing deeply under his ardent gaze.

"Well, now, what's the use of my moping in that old office? I can never hope to equal your father and these other great speakers. It would be different if I had to earn my living. But I am puzzled to spend the pin money father gives me as it is—Hello! where did that verdant specimen come from? I guess one of your maid's country cousins has made a mistake and come into the wrong room. He looks as if he had just arrived from far away in the backwoods."

Marian parted the curtains; and following

the direction of her companion's eyes saw a tall, slender young man, in a decidedly threadbare coat, the sleeves of which were wholly destitute of ruffles, while his shock of thick black hair was innocent of either powder or queue.

He was standing by Mrs. Van Zandt and trying to explain the cause of his presence, in an exceedingly awkward, embarrassed manner.

Who could he be? she thought. Then a remembrance flashed across her; she sprang to her feet and came quickly to his side, holding out her little white hand and saying eagerly, "George, George Morton, I'm sure it is you."

He had been thinking of the little girl from whom he had parted; and, although he had expected to find her grown, when he saw such a tall, graceful young lady, he felt more abashed and embarrassed than before. She too, was timid, and unused to having so many eyes fastened upon her. She blushed deeply, not knowing what to say, and was very thankful when Mr. Van Zandt approached and was introduced. He asked George about Captain Haywood, and by his tact led the young man to speak and feel more at ease.

In answer to Mr. Van Zandt's questions, Nor-

ton said that he had finished his college course and was to sail for Europe in a few days to begin his art studies.

"I thought Captain Haywood had other plans for you," said Van Zandt, studying the young man with close scrutiny.

George glanced up with surprise; then replied quietly, "I could not accept Captain Haywood's proposal."

"I happened to know what that was, and I fear you are throwing away a fine chance, Mr. Morton—one that you will regret later in life."

"It may be, sir; but I must follow my own convictions. The desire to study art is as strong upon me, as in my earliest boyhood. I must make the attempt. My chief regret is that I can not comply with Captain Haywood's wishes for his own sake, in return for the great help he has given me."

"Oh, I am so glad you didn't give it up! I know you will succeed," cried Marian, in her eager impulsive way. He turned quickly toward her; and the smile of pleasure which her words called forth was like a flash of inward light illuminating his dark gray eyes, and playing around every curve and line of his strong rugged

features, till his face seemed transformed like the rocks of his native state when suddenly bathed in sunlight. For a moment, both forgot every thing but their free old life on the prairie.

But dinner was now announced, and in some way, neither could tell how, when they were seated the whole length of the table separated them, while Harry Radcliff had again secured his place by Marian's side.

During the years of his college course Morton had devoted himself so entirely to study and labor, that he lacked the ease and polish which come from mingling in good society. Now he was doubly embarrassed, by the feeling that he was an uninvited guest, and that his host not only was annoyed by his awkward dress and manners, but regarded him as a fool for throwing away the chance of acquiring wealth and position by becoming Captain Haywood's adopted son, and remaining in his own country.

He looked down the long table with its rich appointments, and saw Marian listening with drooping eye-lashes and flushed cheeks to the merry talk of the elegantly dressed, high-bred young man at her side, and felt that a great gulf separated them—that the hope which had

cheered him through all the years of study was blasted. Before he could reach a position that would entitle him to become her suitor, she would be won by another.

When would that long dinner be over so that he could escape! He never knew in what sort of automatic way he got through those ceremonies. His thoughts were fastened upon Marian, and he felt inclined to hurl young Radcliff from his seat and rush away with her as belonging of right to himself. Had he not discovered her, a poor abused bond-child? Surely he had the first claim. Yet his own acts had forged the chains that now held them apart; chains whose strong links he felt himself powerless to sever. Still, he believed that if an opportunity were given him, he could revive their old affection; for occasionally she raised her eyes, their glances met, and she answered his sad pleading gaze with one of timid questioning as to whether he was still the same hero of her childhood that her memory had so faithfully cherished.

How different in fancy she had pictured their next meeting! Trained as she had been in the studied etiquette of that day, she could

not but feel the contrast in appearance and manners, between George and the polished young man at her side ; and she winced under his sarcastic remarks upon her rustic friend ; remarks she resented, but which she was too young and self-conscious to meet with the retort she longed to give.

After the ladies retired, conversation turned upon political subjects, and George insensibly forgot his position while listening to the brilliant thoughts, the keen wit that flashed back and forth, as those great men exchanged opinions on the topics then agitating the public mind.

Mr. John Jay was seated next to George, and becoming interested in watching his intelligent face, gradually drew him into the conversation. He spoke modestly, but with an originality and force that at once arrested attention.

When Mr. Jay discovered his plan of studying art in Europe, he said, "I wish if you had time you would call at my house. I would like to show you a bust made of me by Ceracchi, an Italian sculptor, who used to have his atelier in this city. It is called a good likeness. He also made one of President Washington, which I consider perfect."

"Is he in this country now?"

"No, he has returned to Rome, and I hear is executing some fine work there. By the way, I have a letter in my pocket that came by the last mail. I'll give you his address at once."

The old gentleman took out a sheet of blank paper from his note-book, wrote down the foreign address and beneath it the words, "Please allow me to introduce to your acquaintance, Mr. George Morton. Any assistance you can render him I shall consider a personal favor. Yours most sincerely,

"JOHN JAY."

"There, young man," he said, handing the note to George, "that line will introduce you to a noble man; one whose talent our country could not now fully appreciate, or rather reward, as it deserved. He had a grand design for a national monument, which he wished Congress to embody either in marble or in bronze. He was a zealous republican, and came here anxious to identify himself with our infant country. But we were too much in debt. It is a pity we could not have employed him."

"I think, sir," said Van Zandt, with a graceful bow, "he could not have perpetuated his

name more honorably or to better purpose than in giving us those speaking likenesses of yourself and His Excellency President Washington. He took yours also, did he not, Colonel Hamilton?"

"Yes, and it is considered very good. By the way, did you know that we have just established an Academy of Fine Arts here? Still, we are not very liberal patrons of home talent, so I suppose, Mr. Morton, you will need to study abroad to win any laurels. Robert Fulton went to England and studied under Benjamin West."

"But I've heard that he has given up painting, and is now experimenting with steam," said the French ambassador. "I have also just heard that he and Chancellor Livingston came near blowing themselves up on the Seine. His tea-kettle was too big for his craft, and split it in two. It was a wonder that both he and the chancellor were not drowned."

"He might better have stuck to his brushes and canvas than try such a crazy scheme," said Hamilton, laughing.

"You may call those men crazy, but I believe we'll live to see the time when we can go to

Albany in a day, in spite of wind or tide," said Dr. Mitchell, who was regarded as a sort of living encyclopedia, sought after by all inventors of that period; but upon whom the wits made numerous jokes, especially upon his faith in steam.

"Really, doctor, I was told the other day that you were advocating the use of steam for land travel, too," said Van Zandt. "I heard that you said, ere long we will use iron horses, which would only need wood and water to keep them going. I believe one man got his horse down to a single straw a day, but then he died. Your plan would be cheaper still, if warranted to work."

"You may all laugh now, and I'll join with you, but I can assure you, gentlemen, that discoveries in science and invention are but in their infancy, like our country. When we die, great as we are, all knowledge will not perish with us. And it is well that as our feeble hands drop the alembic ere the magic secret is revealed, and as our dim vision fails to trace all the orbits of the distant worlds, others will take up our discoveries where we leave them, and go on to still greater achievements."

Here the gentlemen rose from the table, and returned to the drawing room. George soon found that he would have no chance of talking with Marian alone, and resolved to secure an interview the next day. So he begged of Mrs. Van Zandt permission to call again before sailing, and with a quiet good-by left the room.

CHAPTER VIII.

PASSING UNDER THE SHADOW.

WHEN Morton returned to Becker's Tavern, he found that a message had been left for him by the captain of the ship in which he had taken passage, to the effect that the cargo was all on board, and that if wind and tide were favorable, he should leave port at six o'clock the next morning.

At first Morton felt that he must see Marian again, and he was inclined to give up his passage. But ships were not sailing to Europe every day, and he saw that it would be folly to wait for another chance. His interview with Marian could be but brief at best. He was in no position to speak of his real feelings toward her, for he well understood how Mr. Van Zandt regarded his rejection of Captain Haywood's offer.

He wrote Marian a letter explaining his sud-

den departure, and declaring his intention to make every possible search for her parents; closing with the hope that she would not forget the friend of her childhood during his absence, which he hoped would be brief.

It was a bitter disappointment to Marian to receive this, and know that already the waters of the Atlantic were rolling between them. She recalled her childhood's purpose to join him, and realized what barriers the years had raised—barriers that might divide them even more hopelessly than the wide ocean. It did not seem probable that she would ever see him again. When she referred to her desire to visit Europe in quest of her parents, Mr. Van Zandt always found some excuse for postponement. His large law practice made a long absence almost impossible. It was not a summer trip in those days, and Mrs. Van Zandt had a great shrinking from the long voyage. It seemed such a hopeless search with no clew to guide them; but Marian resolved that, when she was old enough to act independently nothing should hold her back.

A dark shadow, however, was coming over the life that had been so peaceful, so free from

care in this beautiful home. A few days after the dinner party, Mr. Van Zandt, while taking a ride in the country, was thrown from his horse, and, striking his head heavily on a rock, was brought home insensible. Marian, sitting in the library, heard the sound of heavy footsteps passing through the hall, and her mother's shriek. Rushing out, she saw strangers bearing her father's unconscious form to his room. She believed him dead, as she saw him lie bleeding and ghastly upon his bed.

Her mother, overcome by the shock, passed into a deep swoon, and upon Marian alone devolved the duty of directing the frightened servants and rendering what assistance was necessary; but her strong energy rose equal to the emergency, and the presence of mind she displayed astonished the attendant physicians.

For days Mr. Van Zandt remained insensible. Then came a change, but one, alas! far worse than death. His brilliant mind was shattered, his reason gone. We will not dwell on the three painful years that followed. Only those who have passed through the awful experience, can know what life became to his wife and daughter, who watched the slow development

of his disease, often in sad pity, often in trembling fear.

Upon the first shock of a sudden calamity, our strength, partly the result of excitement, seems equal to the emergency, and we feel able to meet any demand made upon our courage, our patience, our love. It is the prolonged struggle, the dreary monotony of a hopeless trial—it is the hiding of some miserable skeleton, while striving to appear as if all were bright and fair; as if there were no hidden chamber which we must enter alone—it is day following day in wearing routine or terrible anxiety, in long watches that blanch the cheek and dim the eyes—this is the strain which tests character. We then either sink in despair, or the soul turns to the silent, far-off heavens for some voice that will respond to its deepest need, some solution of this awful mystery of sorrow.

Through such discipline Marian now passed, and thereby she was driven to seek a higher support. She learned the peace of perfect trust, the sweetness of rest on a love that knows no change, and gained that self-forgetfulness which is willing to help, and to suffer.

But at last the end came to Mr. Van Zandt. The weary troubled brain found rest. They could lay him away in his "long home," and in memory go back to the time when he stood, the loving husband and father, in the full vigor of his manhood.

Mrs. Van Zandt had come to lean upon Marian as a strong support during those sad years, and she looked with wonder on the brave endurance, the self-control, and control thereby over her husband's weakened brain, which the young girl had acquired.

During these years her own health failed, and at their close she was an almost helpless invalid. Their family physician said she must have entire change of scene, and a quiet life in the country if she would recover. She had an aunt living at New Windsor among the highlands of the Hudson, who came down to the funeral, and who now insisted upon taking her and Marian to pass the summer at her simple, old-fashioned home.

CHAPTER IX.

LIFE IN THE COUNTRY.

MRS. VAN ZANDT'S aunt was the widow of Colonel Allison, whose residence during the last years of the war had been the headquarters of General Knox, when the American army lay encamped upon the banks of the Hudson.

The building was of stone, a fine specimen of Elizabethan architecture, specially noticeable for its steep sloping roof and high chimneys. It stood a short distance from the road, and from the north came a winding stream which spread into a pond at the side of the house, the green lawn sloping down to the water's edge. A race-way from this, by an underground tunnel supplied a mill at the head of a steep ravine. There was no view of the river, only on the one side the blue summits of the Highlands, and on the other broken lines of green hills in the distance, and fields of

corn and wheat through which wound the country road.

Colonel Allison had died shortly after the close of the war; and the widow's family now consisted of one son who had charge of the flour mill, his wife and two children, and her bachelor brother, whom every body far and near called Uncle Aleck. He was a small, slender, white-haired man, of marked personal appearance and winsome character. He was always faultlessly dressed, with black silk stockings, large silver knee and shoe buckles, dainty frills, and high stiff neckerchief. But above the latter, rose a face of such benevolence and courtesy that he was loved and trusted by young and old.

As his time was wholly devoted to natural pursuits, including botany, his simple country neighbors thought him slightly demented; it being in their opinion the height of folly for a man to spend his life collecting plants, bugs, moths, and butterflies. Still it was a harmless hobby; and they all agreed there was some use in knowing the virtue of herbs for medicine.

Will and May, his little nephew and niece,

were his devoted adherents; and many long tramps they took together, searching for new specimens. May was ten years old and Will fourteen. They had spent most of their lives with this uncle, in the open air, as free and happy as the birds; and they were as quaintly intelligent upon the subjects he specially valued, as they were ignorant of many others usually well known to children of their age.

On the evening of Marian's arrival, they were completely won by her beautiful face and affectionate manner. Will was shy at first, like all boys of his age unaccustomed to meeting strangers. But long before bed-time, Marian had May on her lap and Will on a bench close beside her, listening with breathless interest to descriptions of her life when a child upon the prairie. In return, they told her of their delightful walks with their uncle, of his large collection, and asked if she would not like to see it. She at once assented, and Mr. Allen was summoned to exhibit his treasures. He came up and conducted her to his room, as eager as the children to interest her in his pursuits.

When he showed her his beautifully-pressed flowers and ferns, she said, "I have always

wanted to study botany, as I am very fond of flowers; but I am mortally afraid of bugs—big-bugs especially.”

“Oh, but Cousin Marian, you don’t know what fun it is to go hunting for them!”

“I am sure it must be delightful, especially the butterflies. May I join the party sometimes, Mr. Allen.”

“Call me Uncle Aleck, dear. I have already in heart adopted you; and I am anticipating great pleasure in showing you how much there is to win our admiration in what most people pass unheeded by. To-morrow is Sunday, but some day next week I will take you for a long walk up the Moodna Creek. You’ll be charmed with the stream, and I’ll then show you where these beautiful ferns grow.”

“Uncle Aleck, won’t you invite Helen Grey, too?”

“Who is she? A playmate of yours?” asked Marian.

“No,” replied the old gentleman. “She is our minister’s daughter. A young girl about your age, and a great favorite with us. I will introduce you to her to-morrow. I am sure you will like her.”

The next morning when Marian looked out of her window, the Sabbath's peace seemed to rest upon every thing. The boom of the heavy wheel at the mill was hushed. The gates had been closed, and the little water that trickled down over the rocks made only a soft accompaniment for the birds caroling their song in nature's temple.

Deacon Allison, as Richard was called, asked Marian if she could ride two miles to church. Grandma Allison offered to remain with her mother, and so Marian was eager to go. Chairs were placed in the large family wagon, washed clean from the week's use; and seated in these, they rode slowly through the sweet quiet lanes shaded by dark symmetrical cedars, and guarded on either side by stone walls nearly hidden by clematis and bittersweet.

The little church was a wooden structure, innocent of paint; and the rains of many seasons, dripping in streaks from its shutterless windows, seemed to have left traces of perpetual tears. But on the green slope in front were fine old oaks and maples, and in the quaint quiet graveyard behind, long branches of graceful elms swayed over the green mounds.

Steps ran along the entire front of the church, on which, it seemed to Marion that the whole congregation stood to see them alight from their unstable seats ; while the bell began to toll, as if the appearance of Deacon Allison's stout bays was the signal it had waited for.

Great was Marian's surprise on entering, to find the pews facing the doors. The pulpit was a small box between them, perched half way up the wall ; and at the other end were a few raised seats for the choir.

The chorister, a little wizened old man, with nothing large but his mouth, began the service with the long meter doxology. He used a tuning-fork, which he clasped between his teeth, then held to his ear ; but invariably pitched the tune so high that he could not scale the summit, even with the most fearful contortions. He therefore allowed the choir to ascend alone, and catching on again when he could, not always in the right key, held forth lustily to the end. This was so comical, and jarred so painfully on Marian's sensitive ear, that she could hardly endure it. But her heart was hushed, when the old, silver-haired minister arose, and offered his simple fervent prayer.

It was like an elder brother, speaking from his own experience, of her weaknesses, her self-despair, her longing after nobler action, her desire to know and worship the truth; and telling this, not to some inexorable Deity sitting unmoved upon his far-off throne, but to a loving Father, waiting to save and help each weary, straying child.

Dominie Grey was almost eighty, yet he showed an intellect unweakened by age; while his form was as erect, his eyes were as bright, his gestures as quick and nervous, and his words as terse as those of a younger man.

How Marion learned to love those quiet Sabbaths in spite of the singing!—sitting there—sometimes gazing through the open doors at the green landscape, where scarce a leaf stirred, and the song of birds and sweet scent of new-mown hay came floating in; sometimes deeply moved, by Mr. Grey's bold strong denunciations of intemperance and slavery, our great national sins, which few then dared to attack. Yet oftener Divine love was his theme; and to Marian he seemed dwelling in the land Beulah,—

"Only waiting till the shadows
Were a little longer grown ;
Only waiting till the glimmer
Of the day's last beam had flown."

At the close of the service the congregation gathered again on the broad steps ; and neighbors clasped hands as they asked of one another's welfare, and discussed the local news of the week.

But on this first Sabbath, before starting home, Marian was introduced to Helen Grey, and felt sure that Uncle Aleck's prophecy would come true. Helen was of medium height, with somewhat irregular features, soft light hair, and fair complexion, usually without color, except when excited by some strong emotion, but so delicate as then to betray every feeling of her sensitive mind. Her frank blue eyes had the clear out-look of one who had been shut in from the rough world, and whose soul had never been tarnished by familiar knowledge of evil.

She, the only survivor of a large family, was the stay of her father's declining years ; and the love and sympathy between them were beautiful to witness.

Helen eagerly accepted an invitation to spend the following Tuesday with Marian, and felt as if a new and delightful change was coming into her usually quiet life.

CHAPTER X.

AN AFTERNOON STROLL.

AS they were leaving the dinner table on Monday, Mr. Allen asked Marian if she was equal to a long walk. She said she felt ready for any thing in that strong mountain air. Indeed the young girl felt as if a new lease of life had been given her, now that wearing anxiety was removed. Relief from that, and the new and beautiful scenes around her brought a buoyant reaction, and she was as happy and tireless as the children.

Accompanied by May and Will, they started off along the country roads and across fields. Soon they came to a high hill. Here they saw a building of heavy logs in their natural coats of bark, rudely but tastefully put together, which, Mr. Allen said, was the Temple, and had been used as a place of worship by the army when encamped on the fields they were passing over.

He showed Marian where the different

regiments lay, and spoke with strong feeling of the brave endurance of the men ; how much they had suffered there for want of food and clothing, even after seven long years of war.

"Were you in any battle?" asked Marian.

"No. Some one had to keep the hopper fed at home. My brother-in-law gave his services, and my nephew Richard, though but a stripling then. Now, Marian, here we are by the Temple. What do you think of this view?"

She turned, and saw the Hudson flashing in the distance like a clear broad lake, narrowing to pass the Gate of the Highlands. Ever-shifting shadows from beautiful white clouds sailing above them, flitted across the high mountains, upon whose summits beacon fires had so often blazed.

"Oh, what a magnificent spot for a camp!" she exclaimed. "How I should like to have seen their white tents here!"

"My dear! I witnessed in this Temple one of the most impressive scenes of the war."

"What was it? Tell me, please."

"You have probably heard that Congress was largely in arrears with the army, especially the officers, at the close of the Revolution.

Many had become very impatient ; and a young man, aid-de-camp to General Gates, wrote an anonymous notification to the officers, requesting them to meet in this Temple and draw up their last remonstrance. Unless their wrongs were at once redressed, the paper advised that the army should look to its own interests, retire to the unsettled part of our country, and leave an ungrateful government to provide for its own safety as best it could.

“ A copy of the paper fell into the hands of the commander-in-chief. He ordered that, at twelve o'clock on the following Saturday, before the time appointed, all the officers should report at this building and that General Gates should preside.

“ That morning he came from his headquarters at Newburgh to our house, and had a long interview with General Knox. I knew there was some unusual excitement, and finally secured a copy of the paper. I really feared an out-break, when I heard how bitterly some of the officers talked.

“ Just before those assembled at our house rode away to the Temple, General Knox said to me, as he met me in the hall, ‘ Mr. Allen,

have you seen this anonymous paper?' I replied that I had, and feared that hot heads were going to ruin all that we had suffered so much to gain. 'If you want to see something you'll always remember,' he said, 'start right away for the Temple. Here is an order which will give you admittance.'

"I can assure you I lost no time. I had not been there long, when the officers, dressed in full uniform, filed in according to their rank. They filled the Temple, and you can have no idea what an imposing sight it was to look upon those veteran warriors with their scars, and their stern resolved faces. I suspected that General Gates instigated that paper, to serve his own ambition; and I instantly saw General Washington's great wisdom in placing him in the chair; thus compelling him to take a position opposed to all violent measures.

"When they were seated and perfect silence reigned, the commander stepped upon the platform, looked calmly around the assembly, then laying down his manuscript, took out his spectacles, and said: 'You see, gentlemen, I have not only grown *gray* but *blind* in your service.' After those impressive words, he read his

address in language so dignified and patriotic, so mild yet so severe, that I saw men who had evil designs quail before him ; while those who truly loved their country were inspired to endure still further sacrifices. I remember one sentence that made a most profound impression : ‘ Let me conjure you in the name of our common country, as you value your own social honor, as you respect the rights of humanity, as you regard the military and national character of America, to express your utmost horror and detestation of the man who wishes under any specious pretenses, to overturn the liberties of our country, and who wickedly attempts to open the flood-gates of civil discord, and deluge our rising empire in blood.’

“ As soon as he had finished his address he retired without uttering another word.”

“ What did the officers do then ? ” asked Marian.

“ General Knox rose first, and proposed a resolution of thanks to the commander for the course he had pursued ; united with expressions of unabated attachment to him and their country, and a determination to bear with patience their grievances, till they could be

redressed. After a little discussion the paper was unanimously accepted, and signed by General Gates.

"That was a bloodless victory, Marian, but the greatest General Washington ever achieved."

As they turned to go home Mr. Allen pointed out a large white mansion situated upon the bank of the river, and said, "That is where Mr. Delaney lives. You have probably met his gay, fashionable daughters, as they spend most of their winters in the city."

"I have heard of them, but you know papa's sickness prevented me from entering society."

"Surely, I forgot; but these Delaneys live in great style here, and entertain hosts of visitors. You will meet them often, for I understand that Miss Radcliff and her nephew have already arrived."

Marian's cheeks flushed at the mention of that young man's name, and she could not feel sure whether she was glad or sorry that he was to be near her during those beautiful summer days.

When they reached the house Marian found that Mr. and Mrs. Delaney, their daughters and Miss Radcliff, had already come to call upon

them. The visitors had driven over in a stately coach, with black coachman and footman in gay livery. Mr. Delaney was a short, corpulent gentleman, whose courtly manners and rich dress indicated wealth and high breeding. His wife may be accurately described as a woman of a fine figure, elegantly dressed, with a profusion of jewels. A woman of great ambition, with an over-weening pride in her daughters.

These girls were of the gushing type. They had been in society for several years, but possessing no strong personal attractions, notwithstanding their mother's efforts to make a brilliant alliance, they were already considered rather *passée*, and were often slighted by young men for those whom they considered far beneath themselves. They had heard a great deal of Marian, and were anxious to draw her into all their social gatherings that summer, not only on account of her beauty and early romantic history, which they had learned from Miss Radcliff, but also because she was heiress to Mr. Van Zandt's wealth.

Miss Radcliff was Mr. Delaney's cousin, a tiny old lady, with soft white hair neatly folded

under her daintily frilled cap, and dark sprightly eyes that were ever on the watch to render a kind service. To help the needy and the suffering, was the delight of her life, and in all her walks she carried a basket or bag, a very horn of plenty, from which flowers, candy, or nuts, found their way into the hands of little children, or more substantial articles into the homes of the poor.

Into Mrs. Van Zandt's darkened home, during those years of trial she had come as a sunbeam. Marian loved her and leaned upon her for help, more than upon Mrs. Van Zandt ; for although her body was so small, it held a heart large enough to embrace the whole world in its charity. She had, too, an appreciation of character that enabled her to judge correctly and sympathize perfectly, with each one's special need.

Only in regard to her nephew was her judgment at fault. She had been with him from his infancy. He was her idol, and like the king, could do no wrong. She had become very fond of Marian, and her desire to see Harry married to her, was equaled only by that young man's own wishes.

He had now reached the age of twenty-five, and so far, had done nothing in life but take his own pleasure. Already a sense of weariness was pressing upon him. His tastes were too refined to descend to vulgar profligacy; but he had lived under the high pressure of constant excitement. He spent most of his time in the city at the Belvidere Club, which was composed chiefly of foreigners, though it also included some of the most wealthy residents of New York. The club had an elegant establishment in the suburbs of the city; gave excellent dinners, played lightly, and seldom drank to excess, at least what was considered excess in those days.

Here he dawdled away the years of his early manhood. If ~~one~~ was no worse than his neighbors, what more did society demand? He was the only son of one of the richest merchants in New York, and undeniably handsome. So far, every wish had been gratified, except one—that was, to win the love of Marian Van Zandt.

CHAPTER XI.

A RAMBLE IN THE WOODS.

WHEN Harry Radcliff arrived in the country, he declined the honor of becoming a permanent guest at the Delaneys'. He had no intention, as he told his aunt, of playing the agreeable to a host of women whom he cared nothing for. So he brought his own horse and carriage, and established himself as comfortably as he could at the little village tavern two miles away.

The first day after his arrival, he drove over to the old Knox mansion. It was the day planned for their excursion upon the Moodna. Helen Grey had arrived early, according to appointment. She and Marian had walked a short distance down the ravine, and were waiting just below the mill for Uncle Aleck and the children to join them. When they appeared, Harry Radcliff came with them. Marian gave a sudden start, and the rose color deepened in

her cheeks; but she daintily avoided a warm greeting, by quickly withdrawing her hand and introducing her friend. Radcliff, very reluctantly turned and made his bow, expecting to encounter the buxom beauty of a milk-maid; but he saw instead, a slight yet finely molded figure, and a pale, intellectual face, lit up with clear blue eyes that met his with the frank curiosity of a child. She immediately recognized the young man as belonging to a class she had never known before, and felt at once the charm of his high breeding. She also suspected an attachment between him and Marian, and joined Mr. Allen as they all followed the path down the ravine.

Marian, however, kept little May's hand in hers, and Radcliff saw that she was determined to avoid a *tête-à-tête*; so, feeling it his best policy to humor her mood, he made his remarks general, and soon had the whole party merry over his droll descriptions of some fellow-passengers on the sail up the river.

"Mr. Allen," he said, looking back at the old gentleman, who had stopped a moment to examine a flower, "I heard a discussion, between two negroes, upon the question of stealing

that amused me very much, and upon which I would like your opinion."

"What was it!" replied Uncle Aleck, hastily joining him.

"The two men were eating their supper from a lunch-basket upon the fore-deck of the sloop, and did not see me stretched out behind a thick coil of rope. 'Uncle Jack,' said the young darkey, flourishing a large drumstick in the air, 'whar'd you git dis yer turkey? I 'spec' you jist done stole 'im.'

"'No, sah, I tuck 'im from massa's own hen-roost, an' lor bress yer, Pete! dat wa'n't stealin'.'

"'I'd jes' like ter know why tain't; coz I was tuck up onct fer dat berry ting.'

"'Lor, Pete! don't yer see? If I was gwine to take 'im fum your massa's roost, den I would 'a' bin stealin'. But dat turkey, he was my massa's property, an' I's his property; now if property tuck property ter feed property, dat wa'n't stealin'.'

"'Bress me! dat's so!' replied Pete; and I must say, I too thought Uncle Jack's argument pretty conclusive. What do you think?"

"It was certainly very shrewd," said Mr. Allen, laughing with the rest, then adding with

a sigh, "I agree with your father, Helen, in wishing that the curse of slavery could be blotted from our land."

By this time they had reached the point where the wild glen they had been descending, sloped gently to a level plateau of green grass shaded by century old hemlocks, with occasional clumps of smaller trees. The Moodna at this point was wide and rather deep, being dammed below at Brewster's Forge; but as they ascended the stream, steep high thickly wooded banks rose on either side, and the water rippled over its stony bed with none to hear it, but the wild birds building in the overhanging boughs. Here they followed a path over slippery roots and moss-covered rocks, often hiding itself in thick clumps of maiden-hair ferns that floated their graceful forms on the cool surface of the water.

Radcliff was carefully assisting Marian over a marshy spot, when Mr. Allen stopped them, saying, "Here is a curious little plant I don't believe either of you have seen. The botanical name is *Drosera rotundifolia*."

"What a terrible name to give such an insignificant red thing!" said Marian, laughing.

"Wait till you examine it closer," replied Harry. "Isn't the common name sundew, Mr. Allen? I did not know that it grew in this state."

"Yes, but it is not very abundant, at least I have not often found it in this neighborhood. But I am delighted to discover that you are interested in these subjects. Have you made the sciences much of a study?"

"Not very profound study I am afraid. Still, I enjoy such natural pursuits, and shall be delighted to become your pupil, and examine the plants in their native haunts, with these young ladies this summer. Doesn't that *Drosera* live on flies?"

"Yes, it is a carnivorous plant. It actually absorbs, digests, and assimilates, these little black flies which you see on the leaves I have pulled open. It catches them with these fine hairs and this glutinous matter."

"How wonderful! and how pretty it is too under the glass!" exclaimed Marian, as Radcliff showed it to her with a new microscope he had brought with him for his own amusement, but which he now felt had been an inspiration of his good genius to further his plans, as he

saw with what delight they all examined it and praised its great increase of power over the magnifying glass Mr. Allen possessed. But they were startled by Will, crying in great excitement, "O, Uncle Aleck! come here quick! There's a dragon-fly just leaving this grub."

He was standing upon a large rock and pointing to a reed that rose above the water. All crowded around him.

The grub was sticking by his sharp claws upon the reed. Its back was split open, and from it hung an insect with its head downwards.

"Don't move," whispered Mr. Allen. "Watch closely and you'll see what it will do."

In a few moments the insect raised itself, and gradually unfolding its wings, emerged a brilliant dragon-fly, ornamented with rich green and gold, and flew away supported by four beautifully veined wings, leaving nothing but the empty skin clinging to the reed. The children and Helen laughed at the astonishment which both Marian and Radcliff manifested at this metamorphosis, for they had seen it scores of times.

"I have often read of the changes these dis-

gusting grubs assume, but I have never seen the transition before," said Harry. "Would you like me to capture that fly as a specimen for you, Mr. Allen?"

"No, no, let it enjoy its brief day. I have some at the house. Have you ever seen the scarlet beetle that our children call lady-bird? That emerges from a little flat gray grub with six legs; and another grub changes into a fairy-like lace-fly, with two wings."

"How can you find this all out, Uncle Aleck?" asked Marian.

"By patient watching, dear. Nature does not yield her secrets to the careless observer. I have made some very close and laborious observations; and I am now writing a book about them which I hope to publish soon. But come back now, I want to show you some other curious things."

Near the Forge, below the dam, they found a boat. Radcliff took possession of the oars and seated himself opposite the girls. Marian could not help acknowledging to herself, how gracefully he made the blades flash in and out of the swift stream. She did not feel sure of herself, and was excited and troubled by

his sudden arrival. But Harry felt that he could afford to give her time to become accustomed to his presence in these daily rambles; and resolved to be very guarded in his manner toward her before the others, while exerting himself to be generally agreeable. Helen Grey also interested him, as a new type of girlhood. She showed such a peculiar combination of childlike simplicity, with the originality and thoughtfulness of a matured mind, that he took great pleasure in watching her and drawing out her opinions.

After a short time they came to a pool a little aside from the swift current. This was covered with broad water-lily pads, between which floated the pure white lilies.

Marian had never seen them growing before, and now as they gathered them in large quantities, and she drank in their delicious fragrance, she was almost wild with delight. Suddenly Mr. Allen made Harry pause and draw the boat to one side, as he asked if they saw a small spider weaving its fine web on a water-lily leaf?

Presently they all discovered him, and Marian hoped that there were none hidden in the flowers she had gathered.

"Now," he continued, "do you see a sort of little cocoon, also attached by a thread to the leaf? That is the spider's home. It is like an oval bell with its mouth downwards. See! the spider has thrown himself into the water on his back, and is carrying on his chest a small bubble of air which he will allow to escape into his cocoon. He'll come up again and take down another bubble, till he has filled his house; then he will go in and rest."

"Ah! that's the variety called *Argyroneta aquatica*, is it not? I have read of them, but have never seen one before. How interesting the habits of spiders are!" exclaimed Radcliff, with a genuine enthusiasm that raised him greatly in Marian's esteem and won him unlimited admiration from the others. It was a new development of his character to Marian, for he had seemed utterly indifferent to all subjects she had heard discussed by men who had any earnest purpose in life. He had declared so often that he considered most pursuits simply unmitigated weariness, that she was pleased and surprised now to find him so well informed and thoroughly aroused.

"If you've had enough of these water-lilies,

we'll land on that wooded island and take our lunch," said Mr. Allen. "After that I'll show you the nest of a stickleback fish. The little fish must be hatched by this time."

"Do fishes build nests?" exclaimed the children in surprise.

"Some of them do, and I've read that there are countries where they leave the water, climb trees, build their nests and deposit their eggs there."

"Didn't I tell you it was jolly to go with Uncle Aleck, Cousin Marian?" said Will, as, seated under the trees, with keen appetites they disposed of their inviting lunch.

"Indeed," replied Marian, "I seem to be entering a world of wonders I never dreamed of before. How much I want to learn this summer!"

"I also find myself in a very inquiring frame of mind. Mr. Allen, will you allow me to become one of your disciples, if I bring my glass and strive to make myself generally useful?" said Radcliff, handing around the refreshments with impartial liberality.

"I assure you, sir, I shall consider it a great honor and a great pleasure to have you join

our excursions," replied Mr. Allen, with a stately bow, his genial smile giving a still more cordial assent. "Now, young folks, when you are ready we'll look for those fish."

They soon returned to the boat and Mr. Allen directed their course near the edge of the water. It was perfectly clear, and looking down they saw a little fish. Three sharp spikes were on his beautiful green back, and his sides glistened with silver shading to crimson. He was guarding a nest made of small roots and fibers of plants, in which a number of little fish were swimming about.

While our friends were watching them, a large fish came up and attempted to pounce on some of the small fry; but the stickleback darted at him, and struck his sharp spikes into his eyes till he was glad to beat a retreat. Then some of the little fish swam too far from the nest, and the old one went after them, took them gently in his mouth, and puffed them out into their home again.

"I think I'd give them a little squeeze and make them learn to stay where they were safe," said Will, as the old fish was kept busy darting after the truants.

"Did you never run away from your nest?" asked Helen, laughing.

"Oh! yes, I remember I was always wanting to get into one of the water-wheel buckets at the mill, to find out how it would seem to go round; but papa caught me once and gave me such a whipping I never tried it again. See! there goes one little fellow that was just brought back. If I was papa fish, I'd train him."

They laughingly agreed with Will, that a little more family discipline was desirable. But by this time the sun was getting low, and they were all tired enough gladly to turn their faces toward home.

When they arrived there, Deacon Allison was just about starting for the village, and expected to take Helen with him; but Harry said if she would allow him to drive her back in his chaise they could accept Mrs. Allison's invitation for tea; for he was going directly to the village, and passed right by the little parsonage.

Helen timidly lifted her eyes to his handsome face, and blushed as she saw the curious intentness with which he was watching her. She

was inclined to refuse, but the others urged her to go, and such a pleasant ending of the day was a temptation that could not be resisted.

It was a happy group that gathered around the tea-table that evening. Mrs. Richard Allison was a model house-keeper, and a substantial feast was spread, which her guests, having had nothing during the day but a picnic dinner, were able to appreciate most heartily.

Grandma Allison sat between the two children, and kept their plates bountifully supplied. She was one of those sweet, placid old ladies, who seem to have passed through and beyond the storms of life, into that quiet waiting time when the heart, at leisure from its own cares and sorrows, is able to take calm and wise thought for others. Mrs. Van Zandt, in her weakness and sorrow now clung to her, resting in her care like a weary child who had come back to mother and home.

From the first, Marian called her grandma, and had received from her the same indulgent petting which she bestowed upon May and Will.

Harry Radcliff was no stranger in this home, and now he played his part with perfect ease. He was a good talker, and this evening held

young and old entranced with his graphic description of some original characters he had met at his club, showing the idiosyncrasies of each, with his wonderful gift of mimicry. To Helen, it was like the revelation of another existence ; but she did not dream that her intense interest urged him on to more brilliant displays of wit. He had the reputation in society, of winning hearts just to toss them aside again. Perhaps in no way does selfishness show its true character more fully, than in the surprise which selfish people feel, if accused of deliberate wrong doing.

Harry now thought only of entertaining himself with the originality and freshness of this country girl, who evidently had never before met a young man of a different stamp from her rustic admirers. But while she unconsciously showed her admiration of his handsome appearance and conversational gifts, she also showed a power of criticism that piqued his vanity and made him anxious to win her good opinion. Besides, he thought he might use her to arouse jealousy in Marian, whom he truly loved.

His intimacy in Mr. Van Zandt's family had

enabled him to see much of Marian, but he could never win his way to any thing beyond a frank, friendly intercourse. She was so beautiful, especially when roused by any strong enthusiasm ; he could not help being fascinated by her. The very difficulty of gaining his wishes was such a new and stimulating experience, that he determined to succeed. Now, all the skill and energy of his really strong character was directed to this purpose, and though he had not yet risked a formal offer, he had long ago made her aware of his love.

Sometimes he fascinated her, as he did every one else when he chose to exert himself ; then an exhibition of the self-seeking, which she could not fail to see underlying all his motives, made her shrink back. His devoted attentions during the years of Mr. Van Zandt's illness had won her gratitude ; but the discipline of those very years had cleared her vision ; her nature now demanded a lover who should possess high aims and moral qualities which her soul could respect.

Although Mr. Allen had known Harry since he was a mere boy, he was never before aware of his acquaintance with scientific subjects,

simply because Harry had no special object in enlightening the old gentleman, and had supposed him very much behind the age. Thus, this day's experience had been a mutual surprise.

When they had left the table and had all gathered on the piazza, Uncle Aleck said to Harry, "Mr. Radcliff, why don't you, too, write a book on botany, and give the world the benefit of your discoveries?"

"I have made none, sir. I only know what others have found out."

"Go to work then, this summer, and see what wonders you can accomplish. It's time for a young man like you to be living to some purpose. If you have no need to labor for yourself, you can at least try to win fame as a scientist, and become a benefit to your fellow-men."

"My dear sir, I should then be trespassing on your preserves," said Harry, laughing.

"No fear of that. The field of science is broad enough for all competitors, and a young man can bring a strength and energy to the work, which my failing powers now scarcely permit."

"Miss Marian is always breaking a lance with me, at my want of ambition; but I am a confirmed idler, I fear. I don't think I have enough patience to make the necessary observations. Besides, they so often amount to nothing after all. These scientists think they have discovered a key that can unlock all nature's secrets; then suddenly they come upon some intricate ward that baffles their utmost skill, and find that they have been simply wandering round and round in a maze of error. I am too lazy to spend so much labor on uncertainties. But if I have no personal ambition in that line, I will gladly aid you this summer in any researches which you may be making. What do you say to a trip to Black Rock mountain on Thursday with these young ladies, if the weather is fine? Unfortunately, I have allowed the Misses Delaney to engage my time to-morrow."

"I should enjoy going there very much, and I should like to show Marian the view from one of our mountain peaks. There is a rough wood road, so that we could drive almost to the summit. What do you say, girls?"

Marian and Helen expressed their delight with the proposal, and the children eagerly

claimed permission to accompany them. After considerable discussion as to the best mode of conveyance, the style of dress for mountain climbing, and the amount of lunch required, Harry expressed himself ready to see Helen home, as she wished to return early.

When Helen entered her room that night, she thought she had never had a more delightful time. She opened her window and leaned for hours upon the casement, in memory recalling every event since she had left home. What a charming day it had been! She was utterly unconscious how prominently one figure stood out in all her reminiscences. She only thought that she was mistaken in her first surmise that Marian and Radcliff were lovers, and now anticipated the excursion on Thursday with a pleasure keener than any she had ever felt before.

CHAPTER XII.

RADCLIFF SEEKS TO AROUSE JEALOUSY.

THURSDAY morning the sun rose without a cloud in the sky and the air was cool, promising a perfect day for their mountain climb. Mr. and Mrs. Richard Allison were induced to join the party, the former deciding that he would rather not trust the management of his horses to other hands than his own, over the steep rough road. He prepared the strong box wagon for the party, filling the bottom with straw, as a safer seat than chairs.

Marian and the children were in great glee over this, to them, novel arrangement; and some time before the rest were ready to start they secured their places. Here Radcliff found her, and was provoked to see that she had May and Will guarding her on either side. However, he took his position opposite, and soon forgot his annoyance in watching her girl-ish lightheartedness, and intense enjoyment of

every thing. Her fun was so infectious, that they were a very lively party as they entered the village and stopped at the parsonage for Helen.

She was ready, and her old father followed them to the door to see them off, thanking them warmly for the pleasure they were giving his little girl, but adding many injunctions to be careful and bring her safely home.

The road followed a beautiful mountain stream that came leaping down the rocks by their side, as they began the first steep ascent. Suddenly Mr. Allen stopped them, and rising to his feet, said, "I see a beautiful clump of *sarracenia*, or pitcher plant, growing down by the water. I've been wanting a good specimen for some time."

"Wait, I'll get it for you," said Harry. "Miss Marian, don't you want to walk a short distance and see the view as we climb this steep spur?"

"Yes, if I can ever find my feet in all this straw," she said, laughing. Harry helped her carefully to the ground, and over the rocks to the plant they were seeking, while the wagon and the rest of the party went slowly up the winding road.

"Oh, I am so thirsty," cried Marian, as she stooped over the clear water, and tried to raise some of its sparkling drops in her hand.

"Don't do that when here is a pitcher formed by nature herself," said Harry. He broke off one of the leaves, filled it and held it to Marian's lips. She drank it with a little laugh, but blushed deeply under his intent, passionate gaze. Moving quickly away, she said, "I will gather those ferns I see yonder, while you take up Uncle Aleck's specimen.

"Don't leave me, Marian," he replied hastily, a dark flush rising to his face. "I have had no chance to see you alone since I came to the country. Why do you persistently avoid me? I've anticipated this day so much, and the opportunity we should have to talk together. And now you won't listen to me!" he added, reproachfully, as she turned away. She was looking toward the wagon slowly ascending the hill, and said gently, "I fear we shall keep the others waiting. Mr. Radcliff, I want some of those ferns. You can overtake me."

"Very well," he replied, in a tone which he tried to make indifferent as her own, and began to dig up the plant he had promised Mr.

Allen. Marian sped on with rapid steps, her heart beating fast and loud. She had gone but a short distance when Will joined her. She greeted him with a feeling of great relief, and resolved to keep him with her; for she knew from Harry's manner that he intended to speak of his love, and demand from her an answer. She was too uncertain of her feelings to say "Yes;" yet was not prepared to give a decided refusal. She wished to avoid an offer until she felt more sure of herself, and of him.

He suspected her state of mind and resolved to try the effect of rousing her jealousy. Hitherto she had never seen him except in her own home. Now she should know how other ladies regarded him.

When he joined her again and saw Will walking by her side, he looked down into her beautiful face with a searching glance. It was such a pure face, so full of truth and earnestness. He knew it was his indolent, pleasure-seeking life, that caused her to hesitate and draw back whenever he tried to press his suit. She had always made him feel that he could not satisfy what he called her high-flown imagination, or stand on the dizzy pinnacle where

she would place her hero. But he was determined not to give her up, neither would he change his mode of life. He felt sure that she would get beyond this romantic stage, and perhaps his attentions to her country friend might make her feel less secure of her hold upon him.

In a short time they reached the summit of the first ascent and came to a little plateau, where the horses had stopped to rest. A wide prospect of rural beauty lay before them; blue hills in the distance, tufted woodlands, meadows of corn and wheat with a winding stream flowing through them, and the village in the verdant valley at their feet.

Marian took her seat again in the wagon, while all the gentlemen walked up the rough, winding road. But ere long they came to a point where the wagon had to be abandoned and all had to clamber to the top of the rock, the jutting point of which rising above the peaks around had given its name to the mountain.

This was a very precipitous climb, and Harry was delighted to find that the difficulties of the path would compel Marian to depend upon his assistance. She was as light of foot as Helen,

but lacked her experience. Harry's hand held hers in a firm clasp, and his arm was ready to guard her under the least pretext of danger. Strongly as she had meant to avoid him, she now found herself obliged to cling to him for help, while Helen climbed with easy, graceful motion, from rock to rock.

More to her satisfaction than that of the young man, they finally came out to the top of the great rock where all could sit down and rest. The outlook over a wide extent of country and the distant river, was magnificent. Marian drew Helen to her side, and the whole party chatted awhile, and ere long merrily prepared and ate their noonday lunch.

When it was time to return, Marian asked if there was no other way to the wagon than that by which they had come. They could descend by a more circuitous but much easier path, Mr. Allen replied. "Let us try it," said Marian, although Harry assured her that she would find no difficulty in returning as they came. He was annoyed at her persistent refusal, and at once began his exclusive attentions to Helen. But so quietly and unobtrusively that, at first, neither of the girls noticed the change.

Will Allison, with a boy's love of venture, climbed down the steepest and narrowest ledges, and called to Helen to follow him, promising to show her a nest of young partridges. She was as used to climbing and as sure of foot as himself, and was soon on the ledge beside him. There Harry joined her, while the rest of the party accompanied Mr. Allen.

When they reached the wagon, as Radcliff and Helen had not yet arrived, Uncle Aleck asked Marian to follow him a short distance among the trees and rocks, where he thought they would find a rare variety of fern. Lowering clouds had meanwhile come over the sky, and rain began to fall before they reached the place.

"Oh, Marian! I fear you'll get wet," said the old gentleman, looking up with surprise. "I think, however, it is only a passing cloud. There ought to be a mountain cottage somewhere near, if I recollect aright."

They hurried on and soon came upon a solitary hut, with walls propped up by posts, and windows patched with paper, and a thin curl of smoke rising from a half broken chimney.

Mr. Allen knocked, and the door was opened by a girl of about fifteen, while several younger children crowded around her to see who had come.

"Can we take shelter here a few minutes from the rain?" he asked.

"Yes, sir, if you'll not mind the looks o' things," replied the girl, making the children move aside, and bringing forward the only two chairs they possessed.

The room, although small and full of children, was clean, and so were the children, though very poorly and scantily clad. A pile of baskets and materials for weaving them occupied one corner, and two of the older boys were there at work. Lying on a bed in another corner was the mother, evidently very sick.

"I am very sorry to see you so ill. What is the matter?" asked Marian, as she went to the bed-side.

The woman started up and stared at her for several moments, as if she had been an apparition.

"Whar'd you come from? Who be ye?" she finally gasped.

"I am Miss Van Zandt. This gentleman and I were looking for ferns when the rain caught us, and we came here for shelter."

"You don't live about here, I guess," said the woman, still regarding her with a fixed stare.

"No, my home is in New York."

"H'm! I thought I would have seen you afore if you'd allers lived near. Tain't likely it's her," she muttered to herself; then added aloud, "I don't know as you kin find a decent spot to sit down in; the young-uns git things so thick. I'm laid up wid a drufful bad spell o' fever, an' Sarie Jane has to do all the work."

"Where is your husband, Mrs. Skinner?" asked Uncle Aleck. "I haven't been on this mountain for several years, but I used to meet him quite often with loads of wood in the village. I've missed him lately."

"Bless you, sir! he's been dead mor'n two years, an' we've been gettin' poorer ever since. Now I'm laid up, I don't know what'll become of us, for they's all too young to earn a livin' 'cept Sarie Jane, an' I can't spare her. Bob an' Tim tries ter sell baskets an' berries, but most folks don't 'pear to want none."

"Some of these baskets are very pretty and all are neatly made," said Marian, going over to the boys and examining their work. The woman's deep, sunken eyes followed her with a perplexed look, as she again muttered, "It's queer. I never seed sich a likeness."

"I think, Uncle Aleck, I shall want three of these for my plants and moss," said Marian, picking out such as she could carry. "Then I think mamma would like this one for a clothes-basket. Do you suppose, Bob, you and your brother could bring it to me to-morrow, with some wild raspberries? You know where Deacon Allison lives, don't you?"

"Whar the flour mill is?" asked Bob.

"Yes, that is the place. I will pay you for these now," she said, taking a five dollar bill from her purse, and laying it on the old rickety table.

"I haven't any change and they don't cost half that," said the sick woman.

"I will make the change a present," replied Marian, turning to her again with a bright smile. "Have you had any medicine or seen a doctor, Mrs. Skinner?"

"No, doctors won't come this far for nothin'.

I've tried 'some boneset-tea Sarie made me, but it don't 'pear to help me this time."

"I'll ask Dr. Brown to come up when we pass through the village," said Marian, with a pitiful look at the evidences of extreme poverty which she saw all around her.

"Marian," said Mr. Allen, "I think grandma would like one or two of these baskets. The boys will bring them too; also a bag for some flour which I think we can spare."

"Marian! Did he call ye Marian?" asked Mrs. Skinner hastily.

"Yes, why do you want to know?"

"It's a purty name. Have ye allers lived in New York?"

"Why? What makes you ask these questions?" said Marian, her curiosity now thoroughly aroused.

"'Cause it seems as if I'd seen you afore, though 't aint likely."

"Where do you think you've seen me?" asked Marian, anxiously.

"Oh, I reckon it was only a pictur I saw onct that looked like you. It was mighty purty though," replied the woman, smiling up into her face with genuine admiration.

"Where did you see the picture?" again urged Marian.

"Pshaw! I only fancied it. This 'ere fever in my head gives me sich queer idees," she replied, as her eyes fell beneath the young girl's earnest gaze.

"Mother's allers talkin' nonsense since she's been sick," said her daughter, coming up to the bed. Marian thought it must be so, for how could she know any thing about her?

The flower had now passed over, and Mr. Allen was afraid their friends would be alarmed by their long absence. Marian bade them good-by, and told Mrs. Skinner that she had some garments which she thought they could use and which the boys could bring back.

"I'm powerful obleeged to you," said the poor woman, as tears of gratitude rolled down her cheeks. "Jus' as soon as I git well, I'll bring ye some baskets o' my own makin'!"

"Please do," said Marian. "And try to remember where you saw that picture, so that you can tell me."

"Uncle Aleck, do you know any thing about that woman? Has she lived here always, do

you think?" asked Marian, as they sought the road from which they had strayed.

"The Skinners have lived on these mountains for years. I know very little about her personally. Why do you ask?"

"You have heard how I was stolen from my parents. I am always thinking about them, and wishing I could find some way to discover them. This woman acted as if she had seen me before. I have often thought that, if I could only find the woman who took care of me when I was so sick, and who taught me to speak English after I recovered, I might perhaps get from her some trace of them. It is so hard to think that my father and mother may still be living and that I am never, never to see them again. I feel sometimes as if I must go in search of them."

"Have patience, dear," replied the old gentleman, looking with tender sympathy into her sweet young face, so full of sad longing. "You can not leave your adopted mother while she is in such need of your love and care. Trust it all to a Higher Power. If best, ere long some way will be opened. But I hardly think this

woman can know any thing about you. Is her face at all familiar to you?"

"No, yet I wouldn't remember her."

"My child, you probably have changed more than she. It must have been the fever that made her act so strangely."

Mr. and Mrs. Allison and May were waiting anxiously for Marian and Uncle Aleck. Radcliff had persuaded Helen to walk on with himself and Will. After a time Helen realized how much they were in advance of the others, and proposed sitting down to wait for them, but Radcliff thought they would find the rocks too damp after the shower, and his talk soon so absorbed her interest that she forgot all else. After they were again seated in the wagon, Harry still devoted himself almost exclusively to Helen.

When they reached the parsonage he assisted Helen from the wagon, and before bidding her good-evening, promised to call the next morning with a book of which they had been speaking. He also left the party at his boarding place, instead of returning home with them.

During the weeks that followed this excursion,

he continued his attentions to Helen, but tried not to make them so marked as to be noticed by others beside Marian. She felt at first piqued by his sudden devotion to her friend; then making up her mind that Helen was far more likely than she to make him happy, she took pains to throw them together in all their walks and drives.

She was influenced also by another motive. During these weeks in the country, she loved to steal away into the lonely glen just below the mill, and sit for hours on some moss-covered rock listening to the boom of the wheel and the rush and splash of the water. These seemed to drown all other sounds, and shut her off from the outer world, while her thoughts lived in the world of her imagination. And the face which oftenest appeared there, was the one which met her with such pity, such tender sympathy during the time of her bondage; the face which she had since then seen but once, and for a moment; but then transfigured with joy, through her word of faith in the noble purpose of its owner. Had he been able to realize his high ideal? He had wished her to remember always the friend of her childhood. She was

sure he loved her then. In her day-dreams now, she saw him, still true to her, about to return and lay at her feet the laurels she was sure he would win. These fancies showed her that Radcliff had no real hold upon her heart; and his attentions to Helen did not produce the effect he hoped.

Marian insisted upon devoting the mornings to her mother; and as Harry could not see her then, and the time hung heavy on his hands, he more and more turned toward the little parsonage. This was at the other end of the village street from the tavern where he boarded, and was almost hidden in a bower of roses. It was so cool, so peaceful there! Its very simplicity made it an Arcadian abode. Helen's manner also was perfectly frank and unrestrained. If her eyes were brighter, her smile more merry, if the color in her cheeks came and went more vividly, and more frequently, he did not stop to ask why. He only thought that the change vastly improved her appearance. He brought books of romance sometimes, and read them aloud to her; or talked on scientific subjects, as he found her well informed, and eager to know about recent discoveries.

Helen's education was much more like that of a man, than was usual at that time. She had been taught exclusively by her father; and as his eyes began to fail, she had read to him for hours from the old divines and fathers of the church. Her mind, by this training, had been cast in a severe and logical mold. Harry found himself discussing with her subjects which he never talked about to any one else, and indulging in speculations upon the gravest problems of life. He spoke freely of his want of faith in any hereafter, using all the arguments for infidelity advanced by Voltaire and Tom Paine, not in a scoffing manner, but simply as giving expression to his own perplexities. He thus aroused her sympathy for him in his doubts, and her ardent desire to show him the truth of the Gospel's sublime message.

Helen's life seemed very full, and she did not pause to think what made those summer days so charming. There was delicious enjoyment in the fragrance of the roses as it floated in at the parlor windows, while she worked and listened to some romance or poem; there was even more joy, in those long rambles through

the green woods or along the sunny hill-sides, where the eagerness of their search for rare plants or insects, had in it an enthusiasm more than scientific.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE DINNER PARTY.

NOT long after the excursion to the mountain, the Misses Delaney called with their father to invite Marian to a small dinner party the next day, at which they expected some officers from West Point would be present. Helen and Radcliff were with Marian at this time, and Ethel Delaney turned eagerly to the latter and said, "I sent a note of invitation to your boarding place this morning by our footman. I shall certainly expect you to be my chief support to-morrow night."

But while she was speaking to Radcliff, her father had extended the invitation to Helen in such a cordial manner that Ethel was obliged to add, "Of course, Miss Grey, we shall expect you also."

Helen looked up coldly, intending to decline at once; for she knew Miss Delaney had no wish to include the poor country minister's

daughter among her guests ; but Marian said quietly, "Certainly, Helen, I want you to go with me. You can arrange to spend the night here, so that your father need not be disturbed in his rest."

"You can depend upon me, Miss Ethel, to bring both of these young ladies to your house at the hour appointed ;" said Harry, flashing a look into Helen's eyes that deprived her of all power of resistance. Ethel saw that Harry meant to have Helen treated with as much courtesy as any of her other guests, and was too politic to oppose his wishes, and thus the question was settled.

Ethel had often witnessed Harry's flirtations in society with some young girl whose attractive manner, or fresh, pretty face had won for the time his admiration ; then she had seen her dropped when the novelty passed, or he began to feel he had carried his attentions as far as prudence permitted. He was used to having women exert themselves to please him ; and he argued that it was their own fault if they were deceived by his manner.

In most cases they were playing the same game, or seeking him for his position and

wealth. He knew it was the latter motive which induced Miss Ethel and her mother to court his attentions so assiduously, and he felt that he had a right to amuse himself at their expense. He possessed the power of making the girl he happened to be with, feel that she alone attracted him.

Ethel and her mother, judging him by themselves, believed he would not make what they considered a misalliance when he came to marry, and trusting in her father's wealth and position Ethel felt no fear of Helen as a rival. But since she had met Marian, and had noticed the genuine admiration expressed in Harry's manner toward her, Ethel's jealous fears were fairly aroused. She knew that Marian's position as the adopted daughter of Mrs. Van Zandt was as high as her own, and her beauty and utter lack of self-consciousness made her so attractive, that Ethel felt toward her all the hatred of which her languid nature was capable.

When they all met at dinner the next evening she placed Helen by Harry's side, opposite herself, and Marian with a young officer at the extreme end of the table. Harry was simply amused by her maneuver, and paid Helen

more marked attention than he had intended, while Marian seemed so engrossed in the conversation of her escort, and so unconscious of Harry's presence, that Ethel felt she had utterly failed in her attempt to discover the true position of affairs between them.

Besides her beauty, Marian possessed an irresistible fascination of manner, and a brightness of repartee that charmed but never wounded. When they returned to the drawing room she became the center of attraction to a large circle of gentlemen, and those not already acquainted eagerly sought an introduction to her. Helen was totally neglected by the ladies of the house, but Marian kept her close by her side, and with graceful tact made her appear so completely at ease and so animated, that she received a generous share of attention.

But Mrs. Delaney, jealous for her own daughters, felt that it was time to make a diversion, and so coming up to the group which surrounded Marian, she said: "I think it is time we had some music. Mr. Radcliff, won't you sing with Ethel the duet you were practicing together the other day?"

The company joined in this wish, and Harry

was obliged to yield. He had a well cultivated barytone voice, and Ethel had also been carefully trained; but the songs, while correctly rendered, were so utterly lacking in expression that they failed to arouse enthusiasm. Marian knew that Harry could sing very differently when he chose, and was amused at the listless manner in which he rendered the pathetic love song which Miss Ethel had selected.

One piece followed another, the young ladies of the house favoring the company with several duets; for which they won the same applause which they had received many times before.

During this performance Mr. Schuyler, who was a guest at the house, asked Marian to take a promenade with him upon the piazza. After a little general conversation, he said, "By the way, didn't I once meet at a dinner-party at your house a young man of the name of Morton, who was going to Europe to study art?"

"Yes," said Marian, thankful that the light upon the piazza was too dim for him to see the warm color which she felt rushing to her face. "He was the kind friend who found me in bondage upon the prairie, and was the means of

securing for me the happy home I now possess. Do you know any thing about him?"

"I heard something lately which I thought might interest you, unless you are better informed than I."

"I have heard nothing of him since he went to Europe. I hoped to meet Colonel Haywood here this evening, and inquire of him about Mr. Morton."

"In a letter from my friend Mr. Livingston, who was in Rome last winter, he speaks of an artist named Morton, an American, who has gained great success. He had painted a picture which was considered one of the finest in the exhibition at the French Academy of Art in Rome, and had been purchased by one of the foreign ambassadors. This had so well established Mr. Morton's fame, that he was receiving more orders than he could execute."

"I felt sure he would succeed," said Marian, her heart beating fast with pride and pleasure. "Did your friend know him personally?"

"Yes, he met him at the atelier of the sculptor Ceracchi, with whom he is very intimate. Ceracchi is a true patriot, and a noble man in every respect. I knew him well when

he was living here. My friend wrote that young Morton was working heart and soul with him, trying to alleviate the suffering and degradation among the masses in Rome. Ceracchi hopes that the patriots in his land may accomplish what we have achieved here, but I fear the circumstances will not prove so favorable."

"Did Mr. Morton speak of returning to America?"

"My friend did not hear of any such intention. That is the trouble with these artists. They find so much in the life abroad to satisfy their tastes, that they generally make Europe their permanent abode."

Marian felt a great sinking of heart as she listened to these words, and recalled the letter he had sent her just before sailing, in which he assured her of his speedy return, and of his intention to make every possible search for her parents. Alas! for the bright hopes, the beautiful day dreams of only that morning.

But these thoughts were suddenly interrupted by the hearty greeting of Dr. Brown, who just then rode up to the steps and threw himself from his horse.

"Why, doctor! how comes it you are so

late?" exclaimed Mr. Schuyler. "If you haven't had your dinner, I fear your chances will be rather slim."

"Oh, I'm used to that. Here, Sam," calling to a servant near, "take charge of this animal, will you? Look out for the saddle-bags, and don't smash all my drugs. This girl is to blame for my loss to-night. After riding five miles in one direction to set a man's leg, nothing would do but I must see a protégé of hers on the mountain, six or seven miles in another direction."

"I was sorry to give you so much trouble, doctor," said Marian, regretfully, "but Bob came to see me to-day with such a pitiful story of their sickness. I thought they were as badly off as could be before the children were taken down."

"If two or three of them were to slip out of the world, it would be a saving to the town charity fund. But I suppose, now, as you have me in the scrape, I shall be obliged to pull them all through."

"I am certainly very grateful for the faithful care I know you will give them. Could you find out any thing about that woman?"

"Oh! she is one of these mountaineers, who have never been ten miles from home in their lives. They are all a shiftless, lazy set. You must not indulge your charity too far; it will only make them worse than ever. How's mamma to-day?"

"She does not gain as I hoped. She fainted twice yesterday, after very little exertion."

Marian saw a look of concern pass over the physician's face, and a great dread seized her. Grasping his arm, she said pleadingly:

"Oh, doctor! you don't think this is any thing serious?"

"I hope not, my child, but I don't like these turns. I shall urge her to send for her New York physician and let us consult together."

"Miss Marian," said Harry, coming out to join them, "the company are all begging for a song from you. Don't refuse; I want you to show them what real music is."

Marian tried to rally, and overcome the sadness that oppressed her before mingling again with the company.

"What a somber face for such a scene!" said

Harry, gazing at her with tender solicitude, as he led her toward the drawing room.

"Marian, I wish you would let me sing that serenade with you. Miss Ethel and I made such a farce. With you singing with me, I could put some expression into the words, for my heart would be in them," he added, in a low, passionate whisper.

With a light laugh, she replied, "A repeated performance is never a success, Mr. Radcliff. I will not attempt to rival Miss Ethel."

"Surely you know I do not care for a living soul but you."

Marian turned away with a scornful look. His attentions to Helen, instead of arousing her jealousy had made her more distrustful than ever of him, for she now suspected that he was using Helen only to serve his own purposes; she felt indignant and longed to warn her friend.

Every eye turned toward her as Harry escorted her to the piano, but she quietly took her seat, and at once began a sonata, playing it with a power and expression that silenced all conversation. When this was finished, Miss Radcliff said, "Give us now a Scotch ballad, Marian."

She struck some full, rich chords, and then began singing, "Auld Robin Gray." It was a new song at this time, and very few had ever heard it. But forgetting them all, her dark eyes growing wide and sad, with a far-off, yearning look, she seemed herself to be the broken hearted Jeannie, who uttered that passionate, hopeless lament.

"Young Jamie lo'ed me weel, and sought me for his
bride ;

But saving ae crown piece, he had naething else
beside ;

To make the crown a pound, my Jamie gaed to sea ;
And the crown and the pound they were baith for
me

"Before he had been gane a twelve-month and a day,
My father brak his arm, and the cow was stown
away ;

My mither she fell sick—my Jamie was at sea,
And auld Robin Gray, O ! he came a-courting me.

"My father couldna work, and my mither couldna
spin ;

I toiled day and nicht, but their bread I couldna win ;
Auld Robin maintained them baith—and wi' tears in
his ee,

Said, 'Jeannie, Oh ! for their sakes, will you marry
me ?'

- " My heart it said na, for I looked for Jamie back ;
But hard blew the winds, and his ship was a wrack ;
His ship it was a wrack—why didna Jamie dee ?
Oh, wherefore am I spared to cry out, woe is me !
- " My father argued sair ; my mither didna speak ;
But she looked in my face till my heart was like to
break ;
They gied him my hand, but my heart was in the
sea ;
And so auld Robin Gray, he was gude man to me.
- " I hadna been his wife a week but only four,
When, mournfu' as I sat on the stane at my door,
I saw my Jamie's wraith, I couldna think it he,
Till he said, ' I'm come home, my love, to marry
thee.'
- " O, sair did we greet, and muckle say of a' !
Ae kiss we took, nae mair—I bade him gang awa.
I wish that I were dead ! but I'm no like to dee !
For O I am but young to cry out, woe is me."

When the last note died away, every eye was dim with tears. She had made the song as real to her audience as it was to her own fancy.

" Marian," again whispered Miss Radcliff, bending low over her. " We want something to comfort us. Give us now the " Land o' the Leal."

Once more that pure, sympathetic voice broke

the stillness, and her whole soul seemed to find expression in those beautiful words.

“ There’s nae sorrow there, Jean,
There’s neither could nor care, Jean,
The day is ever fair
In the Land o’ the Leal.”

Ethel Delaney’s words were the first that broke the almost solemn hush which followed this last song.

“ Really, Miss Van Zandt,” she said, “you will have us all crying as if we were at a funeral. Do give us something more lively before we begin to dance.”

She instantly struck into one of the wild, rollicking songs which she had learned of the soldiers, when a child at that fort in the far West, but she now played and sung it with merry variations of her own improvising that would have astonished her early teachers. Shouts of laughter came now as readily as the tears, and she arose from the piano amid a storm of applause.

Immediately the two colored musicians in the hall began scraping their fiddles, and calling to the gentlemen to choose their partners

for the stately minuet, which always opened the dance in those days. Marian's hand was eagerly sought, and until the company broke up she was kept constantly upon the floor, and those who watched her light-hearted enjoyment could hardly believe it possible that this was the same girl who had sung those pathetic songs.

Helen did not dance, and drew off to one corner alone, where she watched Marian and Radcliff with a feeling of pain and intense weariness such as she had never yet experienced. It was because she was out of place in that gay circle, she thought. If she could only steal away home, and no one miss her! But just then she was addressed by an elderly lady, who looked at her earnestly a few moments, and then said in a sweet, graceful manner, "My dear, your face is very familiar; I must have seen you before; or—what was your mother's maiden name?"

"Helen De Peyster."

"Ah, I thought so! You are the daughter of my dear old school-mate and friend, and so like her! I am Mrs. Schuyler. I remember hearing that your mother had married a clergyman, and

when she died, left but one living child. So your father is preaching near us. We must go and hear him."

She sat by Helen during the remainder of the evening, and drew from her a full history of her life; she also told her much about the mother whom Helen could not remember. Helen felt that she had found a true friend in this lovely lady, who, although she held one of the highest positions in society, was as simple and unaffected as herself.

CHAPTER XIV.

A PIC-NIC AT WEST POINT.

EARLY in August the Misses Delaney gave invitations for a row-boat excursion and pic-nic at West Point. The party was to include all their guests, and boatmen were hired to do the rowing ; but Harry secured a light skiff which would hold only three, and invited Marian and Helen to occupy the cushioned stern, while he acted as his own oarsman.

Marian had never before passed so close under the shadow of those grand mountains which have their feet in the blue river. She looked up with awe at the steep granite ledges surmounted by masses of green ; and all the historic memories, so recently connected with this region crowded upon her. But another thought was even more importunate. She expected to meet again Captain (now Colonel) Haywood ; and beside her wish to see again

this old friend of her childhood, she wanted to hear from him more about George Morton. Hope still whispered that since he had won success, he might soon come home.

Among the guests at the Delaney manor that summer, was a Mrs. Warren, a comparatively young widow. She was exceedingly lavish in her praises of Marian's beauty, and strove to appropriate the young girl whenever they were in company. She was a very fascinating woman, but Marian instinctively felt a distrust of her.

As she spoke of this feeling one day at Mrs. Allison's, Radcliff, who knew the lady's history, said that by her coquetry and extravagance she had ruined her husband, and had caused his death in a duel with one of her admirers. It was well known in New York society that she was seeking a rich marriage, and while men were ready for a flirtation, they carefully avoided any real entanglement with her; but in Philadelphia during the previous winter she had often met Colonel Haywood, and hearing that he had a large fortune, had exerted all her powers of fascination upon him; and report said, with complete success.

Marian felt very much distressed at these tidings; and turning to Miss Radcliff, who was also present, asked her if she believed this story. Miss Radcliff was always very guarded in her criticisms, but now replied that she feared Marian's old friend was being entrapped by a heartless, designing woman; and if Marian could warn him she advised her to do so.

"No, no, Miss Marian, don't try it," said Harry. "You will receive no thanks. An old fool is the most complete fool of all."

"Couldn't *you* warn him? A man's opinion of her character would have more weight than any thing I could say."

"No indeed. I'll have nothing to do with *affaires du coeur*, unless I am personally concerned."

Marian felt dissatisfied, and resolved to speak, if any opportunity was given her. She had been away from home when the colonel had called upon her at New Windsor.

Now as they met again at the fort, the ten years since he had seen her last had wrought more change in her than in him. As he looked at her tall, graceful form and beautiful

face, and recalled the poor pale child from the prairie, he could scarcely believe that a short ten years could have made such a change.

"Ah, Miss Marian," he said, with a rather forced laugh; "we old fellows try to cheat ourselves into the belief that time is standing still, instead of whirling by at such mad speed."

"I can not see that you look a day older, colonel, than when you were so good to me at that Western fort. I have often thought of you, and was sorry to miss your visit. Is old Malcolm with you now?"

She wanted to ask about George, but others were present and she could not speak of him.

"No, poor old Malcolm's working days are over. He died last spring."

But just here their conversation was interrupted by the arrival of the other boats, which his duty as host compelled him to meet.

During most of the day Marian was surrounded by young officers, and had no chance to see Colonel Haywood alone. She noticed with sorrow his devotion to Mrs. Warren, whose face in its haughty exultation showed to Marian's keen eyes, how cold and selfish she really was.

Quite late in the afternoon, Marian escaped

for a short time from the crowd, and Colonel Haywood, returning from giving some orders, saw and immediately joined her. As he noted the graceful outline of her figure against the rocks, he said with a sigh, "Poor Morton! what a mistake he made! if he had only done as I wished, how different might have been his fate!"

"Oh, colonel! I was longing to ask you about him. Have you heard how he is succeeding with his painting?"

"He wrote me that he had won quite a reputation. But I don't know whether you remember that the night he dined at your house just before sailing, Mr. John Jay was there, and gave him a letter of introduction to an Italian sculptor who used to live in New York. He became very intimate with him, and he wrote me that Ceracchi had introduced him to those who appreciated and bought his paintings. But this foreign artist was a hot-headed revolutionist. He came here full of French ideas about equality, fraternity, etc., and was afterward mixed up with the revolution in Paris; but unfortunately escaped thence to entangle himself and George in a miserable street mob

in Rome, where both of them met their fate. George of course in trying to rescue his friend."

"George dead!" cried Marian, becoming pale to her very lips.

"Forgive me, my dear, I should not have told you this so abruptly. I ought to have remembered how fond you were of him."

"I had good reason to be," she faltered, lifting her beautiful eyes full of tears. "O, colonel, are you sure he was killed?"

"That was the news in a letter from the American consul at Rome. Can you wonder now, that I feel indignant when I think how his talents were wasted? What a position he might have won in his own country! Wealth, fame, love, every thing a man ought to value he could have had, yet he gave up all, to follow his silly 'ideal.' Now his career is ended by the brickbat of a vagabond Italian. Bah! these enthusiasts never amount to much. Better less genius and more common sense."

"Better follow up the worthiest till he die, even in the teeth of clinched antagonisms," exclaimed Marian, her eyes burning in her pale face like coals of fire. "I don't know who wrote

those words, but they express my opinion of George Morton, both in his life and death."

"Well, Miss Marian, I've grown too old to appreciate such enthusiasm. George was a noble fellow, but he did a foolish thing in trying to save that crazy sculptor."

"There are more fatal mistakes than losing one's life trying to save a friend's. There is a terrible Nemesis following some mistakes. And oh, Colonel Haywood! I fear you may meet this, if you take the step I hear you now contemplate. I know I have no right to speak as I do. But others will not warn you, and by the memory of your great kindness I can not refrain from begging you to wait, and make more careful inquiries before you trust your happiness to Mrs. Warren's care."

Colonel Haywood's face flushed angrily, as he replied, "You have spoken too late. The lady has already won my heart and my unlimited confidence. I know the vile reports that have been circulated by men unworthy of her notice, who take this dastardly way of avenging their own slights. You are acquainted only with what young Radcliff has told you. She has probably wounded his *amour propre*

also, for he is vain enough to believe that any woman is to be had for his asking."

"Colonel Haywood, your presence is wanted here," called a voice from the circle of visitors not far away.

"Will you join them, Miss Marian?" he asked.

"No, I would rather remain here. I hope, my kind friend, you will forgive my presumption in speaking on this subject;" she replied, as tears which she could not keep back started to her eyes.

"My child!" he exclaimed, warmly grasping her hands, "I understand, and now thank you for the motive which I know actuated your words. But you will see, I hope, how greatly you are mistaken, and when we are living our happy married life at this old fort, you will come and visit us often, I trust. Now I must leave you, and I will tell no one where you are if you wish to be alone."

He turned and joined his other guests; while she, seeking a more secluded nook, found a rock commanding a wide view of the river, but nearly surrounded on the land side by a close thicket of cedars.

Here she threw herself down, and gave way to a burst of passionate tears. This relieved in a measure her burdened heart, and after a time she arose and tried to regain her composure, before a summons to join the others should come.

But her solitude was suddenly invaded by Harry Radcliff, springing from the ledge just below her.

"O, Marian! how glad I am to find you!" he exclaimed, "and alone, thank heaven! I've hardly had a chance for one word with you to-day." Then approaching still nearer, he continued in a tone of deep, earnest pleading:

"Marian, why do you treat me so cruelly? You know how passionately I love you—how long I have been your most devoted admirer."

"I once thought perhaps you fancied me, Mr. Radcliff; but I have since been led by your actions to suppose you loved my friend Miss Grey."

"Miss Grey! can you imagine I would turn from you to her? I own I did pay her some attention in your presence; I confess I did it hoping I might arouse your jealousy."

"Did you think you could win me by the sacrifice of another's happiness?"

"You are mistaken again, if you think that lady cares for me. I can assure you our conversations have been of a purely scientific and philosophical character. O, Marian, my darling! I love you, only you. My whole heart, my whole fortune I throw at your feet."

Then snatching both her hands, he continued passionately, "I will do any thing, promise any thing, if you will only love me, only say you will be my wife."

"How can I promise to marry a man who seeks only his own gratification, who leads such an idle, frivolous life?"

"But you have it in your power to make me better. You can do with me what you will. And yet, love, all men can not be philanthropists. I am no worse than the most of my neighbors."

"That may be, for most people are thinking only of what they can get for themselves. But when there is so much suffering needing relief, it seems to me wicked to be living only for one's own pleasure."

"Marian, Marian, if you will promise to be

mine, you shall have the power to relieve suffering in any way you wish. Show me what you would have me do."

"But I do not love you as your generous affection deserves," faltered Marian, deeply touched by the earnestness of his appeal.

"You will ; I can wait ; but I shall never give you up ;" he replied, in the tone of firm decision. "I hear them calling us, darling ; I suppose we must go. Let me lead you down by these lower rocks."

Marian rose and allowed him to guide her, scarcely conscious where she stepped, so many conflicting thoughts were surging through her mind.

But another person had heard the first part of this conversation. Helen Grey had also wandered from the rest of the company, seeking Marian. She had approached unseen, and was just behind the clump of cedars when she heard Marian say, "I have since been led by your actions to suppose that you loved my friend Miss Grey." She instinctively paused, and seemed rooted to the spot while she listened to Radcliff's reply. Burning shame and anger overwhelmed her, as she now discovered that

all his attentions to her, had been merely to make another woman jealous. It was an unspeakable relief when she next heard him assure Marian, that he knew Miss Grey did not care for him.

She did not stop to hear more, but with flying feet sought the rest of the company. She must not allow herself to think, for all her strength would now be needed to ward off suspicion. But in spite of her efforts, Radcliff's words kept ringing in her ears; while memory recalled looks, tones, words, to which she had so foolishly given a wrong meaning. In her humility, her anger against him was gone. She saw only her own weakness and vanity in supposing that having known Marian, he could be interested in her. If she had not been so willfully blind, she would have seen from the first that he loved Marian only.

As Helen stood listening to the talk of a young officer, Mrs. Schuyler saw the traces of her inward struggle and said anxiously:

"My dear child! how pale, how tired you look! Do you not feel well?"

Helen's lip trembled for a moment, but she resolutely kept back the tears, and said, quietly,

"I have a severe headache, caused by the heat I think."

Ah! how pride often helps one to hide a heartache! But Mrs. Schuyler's eyes were keen. She had seen enough that summer of Radcliff's manner toward the two girls, to make her anxious for the happiness of each.

Now she suspected the true cause of the change, as Helen's face grew still paler when Marian and Harry joined the company.

But her manner conveyed no such thought, as she quietly invited Helen to return in their boat and let her carriage take her immediately home.

Helen eagerly assented, and so Mrs. Schuyler proposed to Radcliff, telling him of Helen's headache, and of her intention to seeing her home; that Ethel Delaney should take her place.

As they all rowed away, they heard the report of the evening gun long echoed and re-echoed by the neighboring cliffs. With deep delight they watched the sunset tints upon mountain and river, waiting after they entered the wide bay, to witness the afterglow. As its rosy purple tinge rested on one high peak after

another, the moon, nearly full, came up and flung the dark shadow of the granite sentinels that guarded the river's narrow gateway, far out upon the shining stream.

Radcliff thought he had never seen Marian so beautiful; for her greatest attraction was not in her fine color and regular features, but in the radiance of glowing thoughts, and in the soul looking out of her dark eyes; and to her, this scene was almost supernaturally sublime; and the enthusiasm it aroused, and all the conflicting emotions which the events of the day had called forth, were now eloquently revealed.

As an opportunity for private conversation was denied by the presence of Miss Delaney, Harry asked Marian for a song. Her friends in the other boats eagerly joined in the request; and Marian at once complied, longing, as was her habit, to give expression to her pent-up feelings in music. Now she sang with startling power and pathos:

" Oh, a wonderful stream is the river Time !

And it flows through the realm of Tears

With a faultless rhythm, and musical rhyme,

• And a broadening sweep, and a surge sublime,

As it blends with the ocean of years.

"How the winters are drifting like flakes of snow,
And the summers like buds between ;
And the ears and the sheaves how they come and go,
On the river's breast, with the ebb and flow,
As they glide in the shadow and sheen !

"There's a magic isle up the river Time,
Where the softest of airs are playing ;
There's a cloudless sky, and a tropical clime,
And the Junes with the roses are staying.

"And the name of that Isle is the ' Long Ago,'
And we bury our treasures there.
There are brows of beauty, and bosoms of snow ;
(They are heaps of dust, but we love them so)
There are trinkets and tresses of hair.

"There are hands which are waved when that fairy shore,
By the mirage is lifted in air ;
And sometimes we hear through the turbulent roar,
Sweet voices we've heard in the days gone before,
When the wind down the river is fair."

At the close of this verse, Marian suddenly ceased singing ; for memory brought back too vividly the voice she had so loved, "in the days gone before."

She turned her face toward the dark shadows, and looked steadily down into the deep water. Waves of sorrow rolled over her heart,

as she buried there the dim perspective of the sweet hope that had so long cheered her ; the lost joy of clinging faithfully in memory, to one who was worthy of her love.

Now the night grew cold around her as she recalled the force of Colonel Haywood's words, and felt that she had given her love to one who did not value it ; one who, when he might have remained near her, and done noble service for his own country, had allowed a personal ambition to carry all before it. Surely in those years when she had sat, in what, to her young spirit, seemed like a dim vault, watching a worn out life, he might have given her some token of his remembrance. But not more oppressive was the grave that [now closed over him, than the silence of all those years. She must also bury his memory. It was simply regard, pity, he had given her, in exchange for the whole wealth of her heart.

In silence, broken only by the measured dip of the oars, the rest of the voyage was made ; for those who had listened to Marian's song were in memory carried back to that "magic isle," when their "Junes with the roses were staying."

CHAPTER XV.

FINDING A CLEW.

A FEW evenings after the pic-nic at West Point, Mr. and Mrs. Schuyler, Miss Radcliff, and the French ambassador and his wife, were invited to a quiet tea party at Mrs. Allison's.

The French ambassador was deeply interested in the old house, as having been so intimately associated with the closing days of the war. He listened eagerly to Mrs. Allison's description of General Lafayette's frequent visits, and of the balls given in those rooms by Mrs. Knox, when the commander-in-chief led the opening dance.

The evening was decidedly cool, and after tea the company gathered around a cheerful wood fire upon the hearth, in the wide hall running across one end of the house. Here Harry Radcliff joined them, bringing with him Mrs. Van Zandt's old physician, who, as her health

was evidently failing, had been sent for at Dr. Brown's suggestion, and had just arrived from the city.

Harry soon found his way to Marian, but beyond a close clasp of her hand in greeting, he was perforce content to be where he could only feast his eyes upon her lovely face.

In the course of the evening, Marian was asked for some music. Harry brought her harp, and stood by her side with the air of one who had a right to his position. He so calmly ignored all her attempts to oppose him, that she felt bewildered, and her own sad thoughts did not allow her to realize the impression he was giving others.

After a time the ambassador's wife was induced to sing, and her first selection was a beautiful Italian lullaby. Marian gave a low exclamation, and leaned eagerly forward.

A melody associated with the sweetest memories of her childhood was sounding again in her ears. She could not mistake it. As soon as the song was finished, she sprung up and asked eagerly,

"Did you sing that in Italian?"

"Oui, mademoiselle, c'est l'italien."

"I was sure of it!" she exclaimed. "O, mamma! I have found my native tongue. With that song my own mother used to rock me to sleep. How well I remember it now! In Italy my parents may still be living. If I could only go there I might be able to find them."

It may seem strange that Marian had not recognized the language before. But there were few Italians in the country then, and it is doubtful if she would have recalled the language but for the familiar song.

All gathered around her, as the ambassador's wife still further tested her, and words and sentences long forgotten came back to her memory.

"I think they used to call me Marita, at least I am sure mamma did," said Marian.

"Won't you tell us all you can now remember of that time?" said Grandma Allison, drawing the excited girl to a low seat by her side, and gently stroking the little trembling hands with a soothing, motherly caress.

Quieting herself with a strong effort, Marian again repeated the story of her early life; and often during the recital, George Morton's name

was mentioned in connection with her years of bondage.

"What has become of this young man?" asked Mrs. Schuyler.

Marian's eyes filled with tears, as she told his sad fate which she had learned from Colonel Haywood. Radcliff listened to her description of Morton's kindness with keen jealousy, which was greatly relieved by the news of the death of his rival; for he had always feared that the poor, awkward young man he had once seen, was standing between him and his successful wooing. He suspected now why it was that Marian had seemed so preoccupied and sad since her trip to West Point; but he was wise enough to assume that her feeling was simple sorrow over the untimely fate of one who had been kind to her in the past.

After Marian had finished her story, Dr. Hall, Mrs. Van Zandt's physician from the city, said, "I think the very best thing for you, Mrs. Van Zandt, as well as for Marian, is to take the first good ship sailing for Europe, and go to Italy as soon as possible. A winter in Southern Italy especially, would do more for you than any medicine."

"I agree with you entirely, doctor," said Mr. Schuyler. "And now that we know the country from which Marian was stolen, I think it probable that her parents can be found. This strong clew ought to be followed up at once. I wish I could go with you, but my business will not permit; though I may arrange to follow you soon."

"But how can Marian and I take such a journey alone?" asked Mrs. Van Zandt, incredulously.

"Aunty," said Radcliff, "there is nothing to prevent your going, is there? And if Mrs. Van Zandt will allow me to accompany her as her most devoted courier, I will gladly undertake the responsibilities of the journey. Father has long urged me to go abroad, but the attractions at home have been too strong."

Harry now turned his eyes with earnest appeal to Marian. She could not help seeing that this offer removed every obstacle; and meeting his gaze with a grateful look, she kneeled down by Mrs. Van Zandt's chair and said in a beseeching voice: "O, mamma! I am sure you can if Miss Radcliff is with us, and Mr. Radcliff will attend to all your business

matters. You should go when Dr. Hall says the climate will restore your health. And oh ! you know how the longing of my life has been to search for my parents."

"My child ! my darling ! I will gladly go if these kind friends can accompany me ; but it is asking too much."

Miss Radcliff here clasped one of her thin, white hands, and said : " Surely, Madge, dear, you know I would go to the ends of the earth with you if it would restore your health ; and I must say I look upon this as a delightful proposal. Just to think that an old maid who has lived for over half a century without going beyond her native state, is now contemplating a trip to Europe. It doesn't seem possible."

"Nor would you go now if it was not to help us who can not do without you," cried Marian, clasping her arms around the little lady, and almost smothering her with kisses.

"Well, really, now, I think you might ask me to join this party," said Mr. Allen. "I feel quite slighted."

"Oh Uncle Aleck ! will you, will you go ?" asked Marian, eagerly.

"Will you promise me some specimens for my book if I find your old home?"

"Yes, indeed, we can search for both at the same time."

"I can assure you, Uncle Aleck, if you can go, it will be a wonderful comfort. We certainly need two gentlemen to look after such a party. I am afraid Harry may become so exclusive in his attentions that some of us will be forgotten," said Mrs. Van Zandt, looking at him with a meaning smile, as he bent over her chair.

"I shall be very glad to divide my duties with Mr. Allen," he replied, aloud, then bending still lower, he said in a subdued tone, as he returned her look,

"I am coming in the morning to beg an audience of you. I knew I had your approval or I should have spoken to you before. But I am going to ask you not to mention this subject to Marian at present. She is so shy I fear it might frighten her. Give me time on this trip to win her gratitude, and I know her whole heart will be mine."

"What do you think of my going with them?" said Mr. Allen, turning to Grandma Allison.

"I shall be very lonely, brother, without you, but I think this a wise step. You have long wanted to see nature in those countries ; and I think Madge needs the help of an older head than Mr. Radcliff's, even though his may be better informed about foreign affairs than yours; yet—"

"Yet my gray hair would add dignity to the party, eh !"

"I don't know, sir. You and aunty may be following Colonel Haywood's example," said Harry, with a roguish smile at his aunt's quick flush. "I am afraid Mrs. Van Zandt may have her hands full to chaperon us all."

"We would have required that years ago, my boy, if I'd had my will."

"Don't be so saucy, or I'll change my mind about going," said his aunt in an aside.

"O, aunty ! I'll never lisp another word, no matter how you flirt. But please don't leave me in the lurch now with my prize almost won."

Much further discussion followed, and the next day Radcliff went back to the city to make arrangements for their journey.

A few days later, as a good ship was soon to

leave port, Marian called to bid Helen Grey good-by, and explain the cause of their sudden departure.

Helen's father had been taken very ill during her absence at West Point; and that night and for many days and nights following, she had watched beside him in terrible anxiety, fearing that she was to be left utterly desolate. He was too sick to be left when Harry made his parting call; and now that Marian had come to say farewell, she could snatch only a few moments, although the worst of the attack was over, and she could assure her friend that Dr. Brown had hope of her father's recovery.

To Helen this interview was a severe ordeal. Neither of the girls referred to Harry. Marian was too uncertain of her own feelings, and was afraid her friend might have misunderstood Harry's attentions. She of course knew nothing of the hours he had spent during those summer mornings at the parsonage; but the change in Helen troubled her. It might be the result of anxiety alone; still she feared it was due to other causes. There was more expressed in their parting embrace than either of the girls could put into words.

The day before Marian left the country she started out for a last ramble in the beautiful glen. She had gone but a short distance when she heard her name called, and looking back, saw Mrs. Skinner coming toward her. She sat down on a rock and waited till the woman came up.

"I am glad to see you again, Mrs. Skinner," she said kindly. "I am going away to morrow: and I feared I should have to leave without the basket you promised me. Are you quite well now?"

"I ain't very strong yet, miss; an' it's a long tramp here. But when I heerd you was goin' I tole Sarie Jane I must see you agin if I had to creep all the way."

"It was very kind of you to come. I had not forgotten you. I left some things with Miss Grey that I think will be a help to you next winter."

The woman's face flushed as she said, "I didn't come for that, Miss Van Zandt, though you've been so kind, an' it's just like you to keep on doin' fer us. But I've somethin' to tell you. I ain't sure it'll be any use; but you's so like that pictur' I can't help thinkin' you oughter know."

"What is it?" asked Marian, eagerly, all her former suspicions returning.

"You said you lived in New York. Was you born there?"

"No, I was stolen from my parents when I was a little child, and brought to this country. O, Mrs. Skinner! do you know any thing about them, or about me before you saw me on the mountain?"

"Wal, I'll tell you my story, so you kin jedge for yerself if you was that leetle gal," said the woman, seating herself on an old stump opposite Marian.

"'Lijah Skinner was my second husband. I was born on the island of Nantucket. They's mostly sea farin' folks there. My father was a sailor, an' so was Jim Martin, my fust husband. Jim rose to be second mate on a whal-in'-ship. As I had no children I sometimes went with him purty nigh round the world. I never was sea-sick, an' liked that lazy kind o' life. The captain was allers willin' to have me go along, 'cause I did the cookin' an' mendin' for him. One cruise, when we was near the south o' Spain we picked up a boat load of ship-wrecked men, who said they was from a

port in Italy called Naples, an' they offered to pay our captain well if he'd take 'em back there. He'd never been in those seas afore, but he said he'd go.

"We staid several days at Naples, an' the captain an' my Jim took a fever they often has there in summer; an' both died very suddent. The fust-mate then had command o' the ship, an' declared he was so scart he'd sail fer home right off. Just as we were gettin' up our anchor an' ready to start, a man come on board, bringin' two little children; he said they were his'n, an' wanted to go with us to America.

"He could speak English purty well, but the leetle gal and boy couldn't talk nothin' but Italian. They were so much better dressed, an' looked so like rich folks' children I didn't believe his story. An' I tole John Clark (our captain then) I thought it was very queer how he got 'em. But John said the man had paid a good price for their passage, an' it was none o' his business whether they belonged to him or not.

"Soon the children were both taken sick and the man come to me to see if I'd take care of 'em. When I undressed 'em that night I found

on the leetle gal's neck, hid under her dress, a string of gold beads holdin' a locket. On one side o' the locket was a pictur' of a lady with eyes that look just like your'n now. On the other side a leetle piece o' glass set in the gold, an' under it a short curl o' light hair sich as might 'a' been on a baby's head."

"Oh! what did you do with it?" cried Marian, intensely excited.

"I tuck it off the child's neck, an' kept it, as I knew that man would sell it to gamble with. I was sure it was the pictur of their mar, an' I felt so sorry for her! I was sartin then he'd stole the children. Their clothes was all so purty; an' on the leetle gal's things, 'Marian' was worked in fancy stitches, an' 'Carlo' on the boy's. Hearin' Mr. Allen call ye 'Marian' that day I fust see ye on the mountain, helped to make me think I orter tell 'bout that locket."

"Have you it still? Oh, I know it was the picture of my own mother!" exclaimed Marian, springing up; and coming close to Mrs. Skinner, she continued pleadingly, "Don't tell me you have lost or sold it."

"No, no, miss, I'm so glad I allers kept it."

And drawing a folded paper from her dress,

she unwrapped the locket and handed it to Marian, whose eyes were so blinded by tears she could not at first see the lovely face.

"How strange! how strange that this should come to me now! My own precious mamma!" cried Marian, rapturously kissing the sweet, young face, so like her own.

"I'm 'shamed to say, Miss Van Zandt," said the woman, in a low, husky voice, "I sold them beads what held it. But it was several years ago, after I was married agin. We was very poor; an' it didn't seem likely I'd ever see you or them as you belonged to. Yet I could never make up my mind to part with the locket."

"Dear Mrs. Skinner! how can I ever thank you enough for keeping it safely so many years, and now giving it back to me? But tell me, please, all the rest you know about me."

"Wal, yer leetle brother died afore we'd been out to sea long, an' they chuck't him overboard."

"I remember that," said Marian sadly.

"Yes, he tuck the fever fust, then you come down with it; an' I hoped you'd die too, fer I'd found out by then that this furriner was

calkerlatin' to sell ye both in America for slaves.

"When we ran inter New York harbor, you was still alive, but not much more. I tried to git the man to let me keep you, as I tole him you'd never be wuth enny thing to him. But he wouldn't give you up, an' carried you ashore, while we went on to Nantucket.

"I never heerd from you or seed you agin till the day you come inter my house to git out o' the rain. When I looked in yer face, as you stood by my bed, it 'peared as if the lady in that locket had come suddent-like inter the room : an' I was as scart as if I'd seen a ghost. From that time you've been so good to us, I've allers wanted to do somethin' fer yer ; though when you said yer name was Miss Van Zandt, and spoke of yer mar here, it didn't seem likely you could be any relation, if ye did look so like the pictur'."

"What you have told me, Mrs. Skinner, has revealed the city from which I was stolen ; and I am sure my parents must be living near, for I remember we did not spend a night in Naples. I am expecting to sail for Europe next week to search for them. Now that I know where

to seek them, and with this picture of my own mother, I am sure, if she is still living, I shall find her."

After a long gaze at the beautiful face lying upon her lap, she looked up and said :

"If you returned to Nantucket, how did you come here to live?"

"I had a married sister in New York. All o' my own family was gone when I got back from that long cruise. In a short time I came to make my home with her. I tried then to find out somethin' 'bout you; but, as I said afore, I never did git any track o' ye agin. 'Lijah Skinner was workin' on a sloop that ran from here to New York in them days. He knowed my brother-in-law, an' used often to visit him, an' that's how we come acquainted."

Marian then told Mrs. Skinner of her life of hardship with Martha Bracy, and of her removal and adoption into Mr. Van Zandt's family. Also how she had lately discovered her native language through the familiar song, and their intention to search for her parents.

"But come in," she said, rising to return to the house, "I want you to tell my mother and

friends this wonderful story, and have a good long rest and hearty meal."

This the poor woman gladly did, and before night was sent back to her mountain home so laden with substantial gifts that she felt well repaid.

And as long as she lived she had reason to be thankful that she had given the sick child such devoted care during her voyage, and had kept the locket safely so many years.

CHAPTER XVI.

FIRST DAYS IN ROME.

DURING the long voyage Marian was drawn almost imperceptibly into closer intimacy with her lover. Every influence urged her to yield to his wishes,—the charm of having some one always thoughtful for her comfort; the fascination of beautiful, passionate eyes always seeking hers; the gratification of seeing her mother and her old friends so happy in believing their hopes realized, while she was not obliged to acknowledge to them or even to herself whither she was drifting, as they glided so quietly over a smooth sea during those dreamy days.

Marian's nature craved affection;—and when night after night, she and Harry sat on deck, her hand clasped in his, where the moonbeams dancing on the waters, wrapped them in soft, visionary light, so that they seemed the one

man and the one woman alone in the universe, while he whispered in tender, broken tones his adoration, his willingness to do any thing except part with her, his assertion that life had no value except as she shared it;—what wonder that his words had a power over her heart she could not resist? What wonder that she finally yielded, even while dimly conscious that the present was unreal, and that when the test came she should find him wanting?

So, almost against her will, ere they reached the shores of the Old World she had promised to become his wife, if her parents, when found, would give their consent. Beyond that possibility she would not think; but Harry was now sure of his prize.

When they landed in England they tarried only long enough for Mrs. Van Zandt to rest from the voyage, and then journeyed by moderate stages toward Rome.

They had been slowly climbing a high hill, and it was nearly sun-set when they reached the summit. Here their postilion suddenly checked his horses, and waving his long whip, exclaimed, "Ecco Roma!" and they caught their first glance of the Eternal City.

Instinctively they rose to their feet, and gazed with awe upon the magnificent scene. In front were the Alban Hills, dotted with white villas, plainly revealed even at that distance by the level beams of dazzling light. On the left were the rosy peaks of the Appennines, while to the west and below them stretched the wide Campagna, till it seemed to melt into the far-away blue sea.

The air grew cool and fresh as they descended into the valley of the Tiber; and the young moon revealed all objects in a weird half-light, as they crossed the bridge where Constantine's great battle was fought, and entered the city by the Porta del Popolo.

Mrs. Van Zandt's fatigue made it necessary to remain some weeks at Rome. During this time Marian was almost overwhelmed by the sudden and bewildering transitions of this strange city—by the contrast between the past and the present.

She was taken to the Coliseum by moonlight; and while she gazed, in imagination, on the fierce combats of the arena, and while her ears seemed to be yet listening to the prayers of Christian martyrs and the scornful jeers of

Imperial Rome, she was hurried away to some gorgeous church, where lights flashed upon gold and crimson draperies, and grotesque Titan figures upon the lofty ceilings seemed to take part in the masquerade of religion enacted below.

And so, day after day, she was whirled from one point to another, visiting picture-galleries and churches, ruins and basilicas, palaces and fountains, triumphal arches and Egyptian obelisks, till all mingled confusedly in her mind, like the fantastic images of a fevered dream.

But side by side with all this magnificence were the squalor and filth, the ignorance and destitution of the masses of the people. She shuddered at times, in driving with her friends through the crowded quarters of the city, as she imagined George Morton caught in such a mob as could be collected there; a rabble bearing the terrible stamp of degradation in bodies tortured by disease, and dishonored by foul uses, in features seamed by sickness, poverty and labor. She realized what they could be when infuriated by oppression, and maddened and made devilish, through blind rage and fierce thirst for blood.

One morning as she and Uncle Aleck were strolling along the Via Sistina, amusing themselves with the shop windows, her attention was suddenly arrested by a small painting most beautifully executed, the subject of which struck her as singularly familiar. It was a stone summer-house, standing in a luxuriant garden, filled with rare flowers and the wildest profusion of roses, while near the edge of a steep cliff, and through its arched windows were to be seen lovely vistas of the broad blue bay of Naples.

"Oh, Uncle Aleck!" cried Marian. "I know that spot. I'm sure I've played in that garden. I have seen that summer-house before. Let us go in and inquire about it."

"Where was that picture taken?" she asked in French, as she pointed it out.

The owner of the shop, supposing her to be an English girl, replied in a strange mosaic, in which that language figured largely, that it represented a summer-house and garden in Sorrento, and was painted by an American artist who was living there, but occasionally sent pictures to him to sell.

"What is his name?"

"Signor George Morton," he replied.

"George Morton?" she cried, while her heart seemed almost to cease beating in the sudden shock.

"Does signorina know him? Ah! den she his picture haf to buy!" exclaimed the delighted shopkeeper.

"But—but we heard he was killed last spring in a riot here in Rome," faltered Marian.

"He were very nigh. If Signor Gandet and I had not him found dat very leetle minute de gran' maestro would haf breathe no more. Him amico, signorina?"

"I knew him well when I was a child. He did me a great kindness then."

"Si, si, dat vas Signor Morton's von vay. He vas alway helping somepody. He help me, he help the pauvre artist en haut, and for dat we safe his life. If you would much more know, I can not tell you so well; but mine artist friend up stairs can give you his whole histoire. Pietro will show you his studio si vous le vonley."

"Yes, I would so like to see him. O, Uncle Aleck! won't you go up with me?"

"Certainly, my dear, though these Italian stair-cases are hard on old fellows like me."

Telling the shop-keeper that she would see him again, she turned with Mr. Allen and followed young Pietro up the stone steps to the fourth floor, where he knocked at a closed door. A voice responding in Italian bade them enter.

They found a comparatively young man seated before an easel. He was busily engaged in painting an Italian woman and child, dressed in that bright fanciful costume worn by models, who may be seen, when unemployed by artists, basking in the sunshine upon the broad Spanish steps leading up to the Pincian Hill.

Mr. Gandet sprung to his feet when his visitors appeared, and said in excellent English, with but a slightly foreign accent : "Walk in, madam, walk in, monsieur. I am greatly honored. Strangers do not often trouble themselves to mount to my studio."

"In what way can I serve you?" he asked, as, after he had handed them seats, a long pause followed. Mr. Allen was too much out of breath to respond at once, and Marian hardly knew how to tell what had brought her there. But by a strong effort overcoming her embarrassment she said:

"I have just learned from the owner of the shop below that you were well acquainted with one who was the friend of my childhood, and whom I had believed to be dead, killed in a riot here in Rome, Mr. George Morton."

"Mon dieu!" he exclaimed. "Am I speaking to Miss Van Zandt?"

Marian looked up with surprise, even alarm, at finding herself thus identified by a stranger; but with a gesture of apology, he continued, "I was with Mr. Morton through a long and dangerous illness. In the delirium of fever he lived his life over again, and your name, *mademoiselle*, was so often upon his lips—and there is such a resemblance to you in one of his pictures—forgive me, I could not help the involuntary recognition."

"Then you probably know Mr. Morton found me in bondage, kidnapped from my parents. I have lately come to believe that my early home was near Naples, and I have come with some kind friends to search for it, and hope to find my parents if still alive."

"While passing the shop below you I saw the picture of a summer-house and garden that seemed strangely familiar, and I also discovered

that my old friend Mr. Morton was the artist, and is still living. The owner of the shop said you could tell me all the circumstances of the riot, and that you, with his aid, saved Mr. Morton's life."

"Yes, we had that happiness, and were thus able in some measure to pay back a great debt we both owed him."

"In what way did he help you?"

"He saved me not only from death but from despair. He made my life worth preserving. I was a Girondist in the early part of the French Revolution, and had never known poverty till I was obliged to flee for my life. I had been an art student, and tried to earn my living by painting, but could not sell my work at any price, and was finally driven into one of the narrowest, most ill-smelling streets of the city. Hunger shared my bare garret with me, and was visible in every face and form I met.

"In utter despair I was just about to throw myself into the Tiber, when Mr. Morton, who was passing by, prevented me. He took me to his own apartments, and gave me food, and kept me with him until I was strong enough to resume work. Soon he secured for me a con-

stant sale of small pictures, especially of these models which I now paint for Ferratti's shop below. He also helped Ferratti start his little business, which is, as you see, quite successful.

"Now that you know what we owed to Mr. Morton, I will tell you about the riot, Miss Van Zandt. Were you acquainted with the sculptor Ceracchi?"

"No, but I heard that Mr. Morton became very intimate with him."

"Ceracchi, like Lafayette and other Girondists in France, who saw their dream of liberty realized in America, hoped from the rotten fabric of these worn out despotisms to create again a free republic. He talked a great deal to Morton of his hopes and plans for the relief of the masses: but Morton had also been among them, and saw plainly that it could not be accomplished here, any more than in France. The moral character which made the old Roman Republic a power was gone. The people had been ground down by centuries of oppression. They have lived in darkness, filth, ignorance, and want, till their natures are brutalized, and freedom for them means

anarchy, license, and violence, the most awful forms of tyranny.

“Late one day in March, this people, driven to frenzy by their oppressors, struck out wildly for relief, and Ceracchi and a few others attempted to control the awful mob of men and women, and direct it wisely. I was sitting with Morton in his studio when suddenly the air rang with yells and curses as these enraged men, women and children went rushing through the street. To our horror we saw Ceracchi borne along in their midst, some shouting in his favor, some denouncing him as one of the tyrants, and clamoring for his death. Morton caught up his hat and a loaded pistol, and rushed from the room, saying, ‘Ceracchi is sure to be killed unless I can get him away.’

“I followed, and how I escaped the stones and brickbats whirling from the windows and roofs of the houses I can not imagine. The narrow streets were strewn with broken glass, and in some places blocked with the dead and dying. A fearful crowd had massed in the Piazza di Popolo. Ceracchi had mounted the steps of a church near by and was trying to persuade

them to listen to reason, when suddenly a large force of soldiers from the Castle of St. Angelo appeared. The mob refused to disperse, and a most fearful conflict began, the soldiers pouring into the dense mass a fusillade of musketry. Then followed a most awful scene. *Mon dieu !* I can never forget it ! Old men and young fell on every side, while the air was rent with women's shrieks and the shrill cries of children, as they were mown down and trampled underfoot.

"By one of the flashes of musketry I saw Mr. Morton lying dead as I supposed upon the pavement beside me. Just then Ferratti touched my arm, and said, "Help me save the signor," and we raised him between us. We were near a side street, and thus escaped from the fearful entanglement, and finally gained my home. We found that Mr. Morton was still alive, but it was weeks before he knew me, or I could hope for his recovery. Since then he has been living in Sorrento, for he was reported to the government, with Ceracchi, as one of the instigators of the revolt ; and it was not safe for him to remain longer here or let it be known that he was alive."

"I heard that the sculptor was killed," said Marian.

"Yes, his body was found, and some one, who knew Morton, saw him fall, and thus the report of his death was sent to his friends I suppose. Just before the riot he had made a very successful sale of his best pictures to the Austrian ambassador, and they are now in the picture gallery of the palace which he occupies upon the Via del Corso. I know the custodian, and if you would like to see the pictures I can easily secure your admission, and will go there with you if you wish. The ambassador is away; and I would advise your going at once as I can now be sure of an entrance to the gallery."

"Shall we go, uncle? I would like very much to see the pictures before leaving Rome, and you know we start for Naples to-morrow."

"Yes, I shall be glad to go, if Mr. Gandet can spare the time."

The artist dismissed his models, and in a few moments was ready to accompany them. As they reached the street, Marian once more entered Ferratti's shop, and bought the picture that had first attracted her attention, ordering it to be sent to their hotel.

On their way to the palace the artist said :

"Mr. Morton was preparing to return to America, and was trying to persuade Ceracchi to accompany him, when this riot occurred. He had placed his money in the bank, but found after his recovery that he could not claim it until the excitement had passed away, and his connection with it had been forgotten. I could not help learning, during his sickness, of the hope he had so long cherished, which seemed so near fruition when this calamity came. But, mademoiselle, if you are going to Sorrento you will meet again. I rejoice for my friend."

Marian trembled and turned pale as she met the significant glance the artist bent upon her. She had been so absorbed in the history of George's life in Rome that she had not thought of herself or her present position.

Now a feeling of terror made her almost wish to turn and rush back to the hotel, instead of going on to see the pictures ; but she resolutely banished thought, and said to herself, " I must see them, but I hope, I hope I shall never meet him."

CHAPTER XVII.

TWO PICTURES.

WHEN Marian and her companions reached the palace of the Austrian ambassador, they found one of the heavy, iron-studded doors standing open.

The artist spoke a few sentences to the servant in charge, and then led the way, bidding Marian and her uncle follow him across an open court around which was built the vast palace. Turning to the left they ascended the first flight of a wide marble stair-case, and stopped at the door of an antechamber, where Mr. Gandet knocked.

The portal was immediately opened by an attendant in livery, who received the artist with marked respect, crossed the room and held back a heavy gilded leather curtain, bowing low as they passed him.

Before them was an elegant suite of apart-

ments, with floors of rich mosaic, and frescoed ceilings, and walls lined with portraits and landscapes, some of them by the greatest masters of Italian art. But Marian passed Madonnas and saints with scarcely a glance, till the three visitors paused in front of a large painting called, "A night scene at the Coliseum." Mr. Gandet simply said, "This is one I promised to show you," then drew back to a point from which he could watch Marian's face as she first beheld her friend's picture.

It represented the amphitheater in its perfection under the old Empire. The vast circle of seats, which during the day had been crowded by a fierce and excited throng of the Roman populace, was now deserted.

But upon the arena were stretched the mangled, lifeless forms of men, women and children, some of them barely visible in the deep shadows. Prowling among them were several wild beasts, that had been permitted again to enter the circle, and finish their horrible repast begun under the eyes of applauding spectators. Near the center of the arena, where the light fell strongest, among the dead were two still living, a mother and daughter.

The former held her husband's head upon her lap, and one hand was raised to shield his cold, white brow, which had already received a martyr's crown. The other clasped her child, who clung to her convulsively, while both gazed with terror-stricken eyes upon a fierce lion crouching to spring upon them.

"Look up, Marian, look up," said Mr. Allen, in an agitated whisper.

She raised her eyes expecting to see the full moon shining above the arena, as she had seen it a few nights before. But, instead, the air was filled with an angelic host, bending down with loving, pitying gaze, as they waited to welcome these last martyrs; while the wonderful light which radiated from them and revealed the scene below, seemed, as she gazed, to grow in intensity, till she felt that it streamed out from the very portals of Heaven.

Clasping her hands, she cried involuntarily, "Oh, if they too would only look up!"

How long she stood spell-bound before this scene she never knew; but neither of her companions spoke again until she turned and requested to be shown the other picture.

This was a smaller painting, and represented

a scene on the Campagna under an evening sky. In the foreground stood a cross, and nailed upon it was a beautiful young girl. Her sufferings were over; the end had come, and not a vestige of pain was left upon the pure, pale face. A coronal of heavy, dark braids rested above her brow. The long lashes drooped peacefully over her white cheeks, while a smile of ineffable bliss curved her lips. But at the base of the cross knelt her lover, clasping her cold, torn feet in an agony of grief. He was alone with his dead in a wild, waste plain, upon which rested the lurid light suggestive of dying fires on an unhallowed altar.

Mr. Allen started with painful surprise and apprehension as he noticed such a strong resemblance between the young girl upon the cross and the one standing beneath it. Marian was looking only on the bowed form of the lover, with a face almost as pale as that of the victim, and with an expression of suffering keener than any physical torture could inflict.

The old man gave a heavy sigh, believing that he had the key to that sorrow. He now felt assured that Marian had always unconsciously loved her artist friend, and that she had

just become aware of this, and of the mistake she had made.

"Marian, Marian," he said, as he gently touched her arm. "I am afraid our friends will be alarmed at our long absence."

She turned and gave him an appealing look, then, raising her eyes again to the figure upon the cross, thought bitterly, "I wish I could change places with her; for although still nailed there her sufferings are over, and mine are just begun."

But summoning all her womanly pride and strength of character, she forced herself to appear calm. With her companions, she immediately left the gallery, and was soon walking down the Corso chatting with apparent ease and composure. They had scarcely gone two blocks when Radcliff joined them, saying, "Why, Marian, where have you and Mr. Allen been so long? We were becoming alarmed."

Her cheek paled, and she trembled for a moment when he drew her hand within his arm; then the color flooded her face as she introduced him to Mr. Gandet. A moment after, looking up with frank, brave eyes, she said: "I have made two strange discoveries

this morning. One is the picture of a garden and summer-house, which I am sure belonged to my old home. The other, that it was painted by Mr. Morton in Sorrento. You remember he was the friend who was so kind to me during my days of bondage. Monsieur Gandet was intimately acquainted with Mr. Morton, and rescued him from the rioters. He has kindly given me an account of the event, and has also just taken us to see two of Mr. Morton's pictures, that are in a gallery here upon the Corso."

Harry's brow darkened, and he bent upon Marian a look almost fierce in its keen jealousy. But she met his gaze calmly and steadily for a moment, then, turning to the artist, thanked him warmly for the time he had devoted to her that morning, and shook hands with him in parting.

Radcliff had summoned a carriage, and when they entered it and drove off, Monsieur Gandet looked after them, and shrugging his shoulders, said to himself with a bitter smile, "*Diavolo!* how miserably things get snarled in this world! I was just seeing such happiness for *mon ami*, when here appears an accepted lover, and if I mistake not, one who will not easily be shaken

off. He is already jealous of his rival and probably suspects, as I do, that she never would have accepted him if she had known the other was living, but at the same time, he will keep his hold upon her at any cost. *Mon dieu!* I hope it won't have a tragic end, for he and Morton are sure to meet, and Morton is not likely to love her less for this miserable entanglement. Why couldn't she have been as faithful to him as he was to her? Yet perhaps I am mistaken and she really prefers this young Apollo. Well," with another shrug, "tragedy or comedy, I've seen only the first act, I wish I could follow it to the end."

CHAPTER XVIII.

SEEKING THE OLD HOME.

AS Marian, with her uncle and lover, rode through the city they found it impossible to hold any conversation, for it was the feast day of St. Cecilia, and the air seemed fairly to palpitate with the pealing of bells and the tramp of many feet.

Numerous bands of priests and monks traversed the streets, their black, blue, and red cassocks thrown in relief against the dark house walls, while crowds of people followed them, with prayer books and rosaries, the throng becoming denser near the church of St. Cecilia.

Marian and Harry were both thankful for this enforced silence, though to Marian the music of the bells kept ringing only to the old Scotch song:

“The ship it was a wrack, why didna Jamie dee?
Or why do I live to say, ‘Woe is me?’”

and with fatal reiteration the words seemed

repeated till she could hear no other sound. But realizing that she must banish the thought if she would not lose her self control, she turned to her lover, and, as she observed his averted eyes and clouded brows, she said to herself with passionate energy : " He loves me and has placed his whole faith upon my word. I believed I loved him as a wife should when I gave him my promise. What I have just learned makes no difference now. It is the same as if I were already married. This morning's discovery was such a shock! I shall get back to my old standpoint when my nerves are a little more steady. Perhaps I may not see George, after all. Yet I am compelled to go where I am almost certain to meet him. I must be prepared, I must be calm, reserved. Harry is already so jealous! I can not allow any quarrel to arise between them. I must let George know my position at once. If he still has any stronger regard for me than friendship, the knowledge that I am engaged will banish it, or he will leave Sorrento.

" ' O sair did we greet, and muckle say of a'.

How I wish I'd never learned that song those bells are ringing in my ears. I must arouse

myself. Harry must not see any difference." Here she gently laid her hand upon Radcliff's arm, and looked at him with an appealing glance.

He at once accepted her peace-offering, his handsome face lighting up with a triumphant smile, as he thought: "I was a fool to doubt her; to imagine she would prefer a poor artist, whom she has seen but once since she was a child, to me. It was only natural that she should want to look at his pictures."

He immediately began questioning her about the one she had purchased, and discussing plans for finding the garden when they should reach Naples.

Marian tried to throw all her thoughts into the hope of meeting her parents, a hope she now believed so near realization. Influenced partly by this feeling and partly by a desire to avoid suspicion, she became so gay over the preparations for their journey the next day, that even Mr. Allen believed his fears, which had been aroused at the palace, were wholly without foundation.

It was a long and tedious journey to Naples, and all were thankful when they were comfort-

ably settled in a hotel over-looking the beautiful bay. The second day after their arrival, Mrs. Van Zandt was sufficiently rested to accompany them to Sorrento; and with a morning as fine as ever dawns in that glorious climate, all anticipated a charming drive. Their road led them along a winding way at the foot of the Sorrentine promontory; on the one side the blue waters of the bay; on the other deep valleys and steep ledges, terraced and luxuriant with olive and osage trees, and overgrown by clinging vines.

In the suburbs of Sorrento, standing a short distance back from a precipitous cliff, was the villa Marian had come to seek. She had been intensely excited all day, believing she was just about to discover her parents. Often she had gazed on the face in the locket that she now always carried, and she felt sure her mother could not be so changed that she would not at once recognize her. But she was bitterly disappointed. They found the villa unoccupied, except by a person in charge. From this woman Radcliff learned that it had been rented last to an American family, but she could tell nothing of its history before that time. She,

however, gave the name and residence of the present owner, who lived in Sorrento.

Supposing the visitors wished to hire the villa, she proposed showing them all the apartments. Marian eagerly assented, and flew from room to room, fully convinced that it was her old home.

It was perched upon a steep ledge, and commanded a broad sweep of sea and land. The garden extended from the house to the cliff, upon whose edge stood the summer-house. From this a path, with steps and galleries cut into the sides of the cliff, led down to the beach. Here were a few old houses, inhabited by fishermen's families. They looked picturesque in the distance, the men, women and children, in gay Italian costume, sitting in front of their doors, weaving nets or lazily basking in the warm sunshine, and fanned by the soft breeze.

On the other side of the gorge, donkeys were filing down a winding road, each with a heavy pannier on either flank, heaped with luscious oranges. The animals were guided by strong, dark-eyed girls and boys, often carrying baskets of the same beautiful fruit gracefully

poised upon their heads. . When they reached the water, their loads were heaped into little vessels riding at anchor there, till the fruit was piled in a mass of shining gold.

Mrs. Van Zandt, charmed with the villa and its location, proposed that they should hire it for the remainder of their stay in Italy. All agreed that they could not secure a more attractive place; and Marian felt that next to finding her parents would be the pleasure of living in her childhood's home.

On their return to Sorrento, they called upon Signor Carino, the owner of the villa. In reply to Radcliff's questions, "He believed," he said, "that the villa was built by an Italian count, who sold it to an Englishman, and went away, he knew not whither. This had happened previous to his own coming to Sorrento. The villa had changed hands several times, and he could not tell the name of either of the first owners. He had rented it to Mr. Hurlbert, the American consul, for two years. It was now unoccupied, and he would be charmed to have their excellencies take possession."

After some discussion as to terms, the residence was secured, and Carino promised to

have it in readiness in two weeks. From Sorrento they drove to the abode of Mr. Hurlbert, which was then nearer Naples. Radcliff had with him a letter of introduction to this gentleman.

They were very cordially received, and both Mr. and Mrs. Hurlbert were deeply interested in Marian's search for her parents, and her discovery of her old home. The consul promised to use every means in his power to ascertain the name and history of the Italian count; for Marian felt sure that he was her father, as, from all they could learn, he must have occupied the villa about the time she was stolen.

CHAPTER XIX.

A DAY WITH THE PAST.

WHEN Mrs. Van Zandt and her party returned to Naples, they were very much surprised to find Mr. Delaney and his wife and daughters among the new arrivals at their hotel. The sight of familiar faces in foreign lands is so pleasant that casual acquaintances often greet each other with a warmth that at home would imply very strong friendship. The meeting between the two parties was, therefore, very cordial; and they were soon engaged in animated conversation as they seated themselves in one group at the long *table d'hôte*.

Ethel Delaney had been informed of Marian's engagement by some mutual friends before coming to Naples. She had expected no other result when she heard that Harry had gone abroad with Mrs. Van Zandt's party. As only

her pride and ambition had been touched, she soon rallied from the disappointment, and with her mother's assistance persuaded her father to bring them also to Europe. She had now taken a higher flight, and nothing short of an English lord, an Italian count, or French marquis, would satisfy her ambition. In this she was ably abetted by her mother, who used every possible means to bring her daughters into court circles, and took pains to give every one a strong impression of their solid charms.

If their castles were still in air, they had lately met a young Englishman, who was introduced to them as Lord Lyle. He was one of those brainless, dissipated, card playing, horse racing men, who are very little credit to any class of society. But all this was discounted in Miss Ethel's estimation by his title and reported estates. So she and her mother had followed him to Naples, with the intention of capturing him if he could be induced to accept wealth in lieu of rank. Her sister Clara was but her echo in every thing—one of those lifeless, colorless girls, who make you wonder for what possible purpose they exist.

Mrs. Delaney's hopes rested mainly upon her

elder daughter. If she could only get Ethel well established, she would be less aspiring for the other.

During the week that followed the trip to Sorrento, Marian and Radcliff made numerous excursions about Naples with the Delaney party. Marian had very little in common with them, and had no liking for the class of young men they drew about them ; still she was now glad of their company, although she would not confess to herself why she was so ready to avoid the exclusive society of her lover.

To her sorrow she had been gradually finding out that Harry had little sympathy with her tastes. Beauties in nature, art, and poetry had not a tithe of the attraction for him that they possessed for Marian. And there was in her heart a haunting fear that he had as little regard for moral grandeur, or beauty of character.

She constantly felt her enthusiasm chilled, and laughingly mocked—with tender raillery to be sure—but more and more she repressed all manifestation of feeling, saying to herself, “ It is unreasonable to expect perfect harmony of thought.”

A few days before they were to leave Naples to go to their villa in Sorrento, Mr. Hurlbert called, and said that he had at last obtained accurate information about the Italian count. His name was Marzio Sabino. His wife had died at the villa, and he had immediately sold it to the Englishman. He had no children, and had gone to Rome and died there, the last of his line.

Again poor Marian was doomed to disappointment. Many foreigners had rented the place, and very little had been known of their movements by the inhabitants of Sorrento. Still Marian did not despair. It was possible that by making herself familiar with the Italian language she might find out something in the fishing hamlet below them concerning her parents.

Before taking his leave, Mr. Hurlbert proposed that on the following day they should visit the excavations at Pompeii, where he said workmen were constantly uncovering wonderful remains.

Naples, at this time, was under the wise administration of Murat, one of Napoleon's great generals, the husband of Caroline Buona-

parte. Queen Caroline took great interest in exhuming the little city, which had been buried and forgotten for more than sixteen hundred years; and she frequently visited the excavations and gave personal encouragement to those in charge of the work, which was being pushed with great vigor in many places at once.

One can scarcely imagine a stranger or more animated scene. The men dug away the earth, beginning on the summit of a hill, and the soil, ashes, and lava were thrown into baskets which bevvies of young girls carried away on their heads. The workmen assisted them in raising the baskets, then the girls passed to and fro in their ragged, but gay colored gowns, their skirts fluttering in the breeze, and their arms raised to balance the heavy load, with the classic grace of the ancient urn-bearers.

Mr. Hurlbert had often visited the ruins, and seeing that Marian seemed more deeply interested than any of her party, took her under his special charge. He led her to the house of Pansa, which had evidently been the residence of one of the chief men. He first showed Mar-

ian the vestibule, where the porter usually had his seat. This opened into the *atrium* or ancient drawing room. As Marian stood there looking between the remains of beautifully fluted pillars into what had been the garden beyond, Mr. Hurlbert told her, that, besides vases of bronze, glass, and terra cotta, several skeletons had been found there, some of which had been recognized by their gold earrings as women.

To Marian's fancy was at once revealed the happy life in that ancient home, which had been so suddenly smothered in darkness and death by the awful eruption. Not yet had Bulwer's wonderful imagination given to the world the "Last Days of Pompeii;" peopling again the long buried city, and making the final catastrophe seem as vivid as if we ourselves had been actors in the terrible event. No ruins that Marian had yet seen brought back to her the past with such a sense of reality as these homes that in one day had been changed into furnished graves, and above which the olive and vine had flourished for centuries undisturbed.

"Now, Miss Van Zandt," said Mr. Hurlbert, turning a little one side, "if you will follow me,

I'll show you what is supposed to be the kitchen, and also a curious painting, representing the worship of the Lares, under whose protection all provisions and cooking utensils were placed."

But instead of the picture, Marian saw an artist seated upon a fallen block of marble, with sketch book in his hand, evidently making a drawing of the fresco. He started to his feet when he heard Mr. Hurlbert's voice, and Marian instantly knew she was in the presence of George Morton. Their eyes met in an intent gaze, then, springing toward her, he exclaimed, with almost incredulous joy, "Marian, Marian! is it possible I meet you here?"

He grasped her hand and looked eagerly down upon her pale face, and lowered eyes, to which tears would have been a relief, and for a long moment, neither spoke. "When did you come?" he finally asked, in a low constrained voice, as she withdrew her hand, and he saw the same young man advancing toward them whom he had seen seated beside her at that well remembered dinner party.

Mr. Hurlbert was an old acquaintance, and instantly perceiving that this was no ordinary encounter, and also recognizing an awkward

dilemma, he greeted the artist with more than his usual heartiness, and said, laughingly, "Well, really it is a remarkable circumstance that I should have brought old friends together in this half buried city. Pray, when and where have you met before?"

With a strong effort, Marian regained her self-control, yet she did not dare encounter the sad, half reproachful look in George's eyes as she said to Mr. Hurlbert,

"Mr. Morton found me, a poor abused child, in a squatter's family on the prairie; and but for his great kindness I should not now be here, restored to my old home."

"Have you found that and your parents too?" asked George, eagerly.

"Alas! I have still no trace of my parents, but I am sure I have discovered my former home near Sorrento—Mr. Morton, allow me to introduce to you my friend Mr. Radcliff," she added, as Harry now joined them.

The young men measured each other with cold, critical eyes, and George unconsciously drew himself up, with a haughty gesture at Radcliff's approach. As he stood thus, it was impossible to help drawing the contrast be-

tween them again ; but even to the most casual observer, the advantage now rested with George. As Colonel Haywood had predicted, Morton's lofty figure had filled out into noble proportions, and his strong, fine features, his dark, kindling eyes, and black hair tossed carelessly back from a broad, open brow, gave him an appearance that would command attention in any circle ; especially when combined with that ease of bearing which conscious power and intercourse with the world had brought. Radcliff was only of medium height, and of a slight though elegant form. Seen beside Morton he looked effeminate, with his delicately curved nostrils, his brown eyes fringed by drooping lashes, and his long brown locks, powdered and arranged with the most scrupulous care.

Both gentlemen acknowledged the introduction with marked courtesy ; then Radcliff said in the tone of one meaning to assert at once his claim : " Marian, the rest of our party have become wearied with all this ancient rubbish, and think it time for luncheon. They have chosen a lovely spot under festooning grapevines, and Mrs. Hurlbert has sent me to hunt

you up. Mr. Morton, can we have the pleasure of your company?"

George was about to decline when Mr. Hurlbert said, "Certainly, Morton, I insist upon your joining our party."

Marian also added, with quiet dignity: "Mr. Morton, I want to tell you how I discovered my old home."

He put up his painting materials and walked by her side as she said: "One day in Rome, I saw in a shop window the picture of a summer-house and garden which instantly brought to my memory the spot where I had played with my little brother before we were stolen. In reply to my questions, the owner of the shop told me that the artist was Signor Morton, and that the garden belonged to a villa in Sorrento. Last summer Colonel Haywood informed me that you had been killed in a riot in Rome. You can imagine therefore the double surprise and pleasure I received that morning."

George turned toward her with a quick, keen glance. He fully understood her position now. He knew she was engaged to Radcliff; but her last words had brought a suspicion that she had thought him dead before binding her-

self by this promise. He was not surprised that Radcliff had won her. He told himself he had no right to expect any thing different. But what did the agitation in her manner at their first meeting indicate? Was it any thing stronger than her grateful remembrance of an old kindness? He resolved to see more of her, to assure himself at least that she was really happy, and that the man she had accepted was worthy of her.

The knowledge that she had found her home through him was the one comfort in this bitter discovery. Now, if he could only be successful in finding her parents, he felt that he would be content to go away, carrying her image in his heart; Radcliff could never rob him of that.

But all these surging thoughts found no outward expression as he listened to her account of the first clew she had discovered which had determined them to come to Naples, then of the manner in which she had recovered the locket containing her mother's likeness, and of the woman's story, confirming her belief that her early home was this villa near Sorrento.

CHAPTER XX.

A LUNCHEON PARTY AMONG THE RUINS OF POMPEII.

“**W**HO is that distinguished-looking stranger Mr. Hurlbert is bringing with him?” Mrs. Delaney asked Lord Lyle, who was lounging on the grass beside Ethel, near the spot where Mrs. Hurlbert and a few assistants were preparing for their luncheon. The young man lazily raised his eyes, and said with a little more animation than usual, “Why, that’s Morton, the famous American artist. He’s here copying these heathenish frescoes for the queen, I fancy. I was told that she had given him orders as to some that had just been unearthed.”

“He seems quite young. How did he win his fame so soon?” said Ethel.

“He made a lucky hit with two of his paintings in Rome last winter. They were bought by the Austrian ambassador. Morton was

then the protégé of the distinguished Italian sculptor, Ceracchi, and you know a friend at court is a rare road to favor. I never could see his wonderful genius."

"You are a distinguished artist too, I hear, my lord," said Ethel, in a flattering tone.

"No, oh no! only an amateur."

"Oh, I didn't mean an artist by profession! but one may have a great gift and use it merely for one's own pleasure. I wish you would let me see your studio."

"Well, really, I haven't done much work since I came here. I must do some sketching soon, however. I suppose I must go speak to Morton. I met him at the queen's reception, at Naples, last week. He's not much in my style, you know, except in the line of art, but I suppose I ought to show him some attention."

"Won't you bring him here and introduce him to us?" said Mrs Delaney.

"No, mamma, I think we had better join the circle already around him. They seem to be having a merry time," said Ethel, rising from her lowly seat and accepting Lord Lyle's arm, while Mrs. Delaney and Clara followed.

After they were introduced, Lyle said, "I fancy you are busy copying those frescoes for the queen, Morton. It must be a great bore, though no doubt it is profitable work."

"Yes, sir," replied George, quietly. "I find it very profitable, aside from its pecuniary value. It gives precious data concerning the homes and manners and customs of those days. It is also a splendid study of art in the first century."

"I don't think I'm educated up to the point where I can appreciate these early works, Morton," said Mr. Hurlbert. "To me many are painful, others perfectly grotesque."

"Yes, and yet they are interesting as showing the gradual growth of art. Often, also, I find a freedom of touch, and vividness and purity of coloring that give token of real genius. Others again, as you say, are very absurd, especially some of the signs by which they indicate their trade. The bas-relief of a goat meant that the owner was a milk-man. I came across one to-day that was very significant. It was a boy held upon the back of another, and evidently undergoing a severe flagellation."

"That school-master did not intend to spare the rod and spoil the child," said Mr. Hurlbert, laughing. "But come, friends, my wife informs me that our lunch is ready."

He led his guests to a beautiful grove of poplars growing above the ruins near the center of the city. From the trees hung festooning grape vines, and under their shade a white cloth was spread over the grass, upon which was placed a substantial repast. The elevation gave them a magnificent view. A cloudless sky dyed to celestial azure the ocean, upon which distant Capri burned like a rock aflame. Near them towered Vesuvius, and from its ashy cone rose a pillar of smoke, white as a cloud, vast, opaque and majestic.

But even in these beautiful and classic surroundings hunger asserted its claims; and, while merry jokes were tossed back and forth, all enjoyed with a hearty relish the sylvan feast which Mr. Hurlbert had provided.

George secured a seat beside Marian and they enjoyed a long and friendly talk. After a time Mr. Allen joined them. He had been more eager in his search for a flower which he heard could be found there than in the examination of the ruins.

He now opened his pressing boards and began showing his treasures. After looking at them George took from his pocket book a little pale blossom, with a few ragged leaves attached, and said to Mr. Allen, "Do you recognize this?"

"No, I don't think I've ever seen it before," said the old gentleman, examining it eagerly with his glass. "To what family does it belong?"

"It is the *ranunculus glacialis*. I found it upon the highest Alps, growing among the loose stones of the moraine, trembling, wan and corpse-like in the chill drip of the glacial water; yet by its endurance, its patient effort to fulfill all the functions of its nature, by its strength under the most adverse circumstances, it became to me the ideal of a perfect flower. I have carried it with me ever since."

"Ah, if I were only younger!" said Uncle Aleck; with a sigh, "how I should like to climb those mountains, and study the Alpine flora?"

"I suppose the Alps are very much higher than the mountains about here," said Marian to George.

"Yes, many of the peaks. I remember, Miss Van Zandt, one scene that was very remarkable in its effect. I had climbed one of the highest passes of the Bernese Oberland and had reached a spot where I could look off upon glittering white domes and needle-like crags, with deep valleys lying between. And stealing up these valleys, twisting and coiling round these crags, was a monstrous black, seething, tumbling volume of vapor, through which the forked lightning leaped, while I could hear an incessant crash and roll of thunder, as the cliffs tossed the echoes back and forth. Yet where I stood not even a film of cloud marred the clear intense blue."

"Oh, how wonderful!" cried Marian, her face kindling with enthusiasm. "But, Mr. Morton, you saw it with an artist's eye. I think what we see is always measured by our capacity of vision; just as one may hear sounds only and perceive no music, while another will instantly detect a grand theme running through even the most intricate harmony."

"Yes," said George, with quick responsive sympathy. "It is astonishing how many people visit these beautiful countries who are deaf

and blind to the most and best that is to be seen and heard. And others to whom it would be a revelation of wonder and delight can never see it but in their dreams. Have you noticed that half clad peasant boy who is twanging an old mandolin? His attitude as he leans against that column is as graceful as that of the Marble Faun; and those girls carrying their baskets of earth; one might easily imagine them to be the slaves of Panza the *ædile*, bearing the ancient water-jars upon their heads. Just notice the picturesque colors in the gown of the one standing by the boy. He is blind, and she is his sister, I imagine. I have often noticed her beautiful devotion to him since I have been painting here."

"Marian," said Radcliff, coming up to join them, "Mr. Hurlbert has been telling me of a curious mosaic in the entrance of the Tragic Poet's house. He says it is a fierce dog with the inscription 'Cave Canem,' 'beware of the dog.' A pretty good hint to visitors to stay away, I should call that."

"I fancy some literary men of the present day would be glad to place such a figure and inscription over their portals," said George, laughing.

"Mr. Hurlbert offers to show us this one. Wouldn't you like to see it, Marian?"

"Yes," she replied, noting the frown upon her lover's brow. The little group immediately separated, and Harry helped Marian down over the loose earth and rubbish, till they gained the cleared street where most of the workmen were employed.

In another group Mrs. Hurlbert had been relating to some ladies the story of Marian's life as far as she knew it. She closed by saying, "Miss Van Zandt thought her father was the Italian count who first owned the villa which they are about to occupy; but Mr. Hurlbert ascertained that he had no children. I am now inclined to think she was the daughter of the Englishman to whom the count sold the villa, but we can get no information about him. She was fortunate in being adopted by such a wealthy old Dutch family, and this Mr. Radcliff, her fiancé, is the son of a very wealthy gentleman, I am told."

Just then a servant came to inform them that the carriages were waiting, as Mr. Hurlbert had proposed a longer drive. When they rose to go they were startled by seeing two Italian

lazzaroni crouching under the broken walls beneath them. One lady gave a slight scream, and said, "Those fellows heard all our conversation."

"Oh, no matter!" said Mrs. Hurlbert. "They are only some beggars who have been following us about all day. I doubt not they were asleep against the old wall. But if they heard us they are none the wiser, as we spoke in English."

The ladies passed on. The men started up and looked after them with a chuckle, and, putting their heads together, in a low guarded voice talked rapidly in Italian.

Soon after Marian and Radcliff gained the street these same mendicants approached and held out their hands for alms. Harry tossed them a few coins, but they became only more importunate. One of them was quite an old man, but he gazed at Marian with such a sinister expression, and there was something in his face which seemed so strangely familiar, that she turned from him in fear, and clung still closer to Harry's arm. Had she ever seen him before; and why did his persistent following give her such a presentiment of evil? Harry

peremptorily ordered them away ; but they continued their whining complaints, until a sudden cry of alarm caused a diversion. A large stone pillar around which the earth had been loosened, tottered, just about to fall ; and right beneath it stood the little blind musician to whom George had called Marian's attention while at lunch.

All felt that the boy must instantly be crushed ; but at that moment Morton sprang forward, caught the child, and with one powerful leap cleared the spot, as the lofty column came crashing down. So close was he, and so covered with the débris, that all held their breath, [in the fear that there had been two victims instead of one. But as soon as the dust settled a little, George emerged, placed the terrified boy on the ground, and, taking out his handkerchief, began in a matter-of-fact way to wipe the ashes from his face and his clothes.

The company gathered around him to congratulate him on his escape, and to praise his generous act.

"That was an awful risk you ran, Mr. Morton," said Harry. "What a pity it was not one of these fair ladies you had so gallantly

rescued, instead of a miserable beggar, a few of whom might easily be spared."

"His life is dear to some one. I had little to risk," said George, quietly.

Scarcely had he ceased speaking when the boy's sister returned with her empty basket, tossed it aside, and rushing up to the little fellow clasped him in her arms, while great tears rolled down her face. For a moment they spoke in rapid tones, then she left him and threw herself at George's feet, crying, "Grazie, grazie, signore;" and in the soft Italian language continued to pour out her thanks, till George finally persuaded her to allow him to go on with his party.

Marian walked rapidly ahead, and as soon as possible regained their carriage. There she leaned back pale and trembling, for it seemed as if that broken column had fallen across her own heart. When Radcliff anxiously questioned her, as he noted her unusual pallor, she told him of the feeling she had experienced from the persistent following of those beggars, before this second alarm, said she was very tired, and begged him to return with her at once to their hotel.

He was nothing loth. His jealous eye at once discovered that Morton had not forgotten Marian, and he realized that he had a very formidable rival ; for with all his self-assurance, he was conscious that he now appeared at a disadvantage in contrast with Morton, physically and morally. He knew Marian had engaged herself to him almost under protest, and he dared not press their marriage lest she should entirely withdraw her consent. Neither did he feel it wise to let her see that he was jealous, nor that he doubted her affection in the least. But now he was only too glad to withdraw her from Morton's company, and exerted his utmost power to regain his hold upon her heart.

CHAPTER XXI.

DOUBTS AND STRUGGLES.

AFTER Marian was fairly established in her old home, she set herself to acquire facility in speaking and understanding Italian ; for she felt sure that the best chance to trace her parents would be through the peasants living near the villa. She hoped that the loss of the two children might still be remembered, or that some one would recognize her mother's picture, and thus recall their names. Harry had no faith in this belief, though he at first accompanied her on her visits to the little fishing hamlet at the foot of the cliff, and acted as her interpreter. But he had no tact in winning confidence. His questions met with surly, suspicious answers, and a denial of any knowledge of the former owners of the villa. He therefore urged Marian to give up her search

among these people. The man who stole her, he said, was probably one of the brigands who had always infested that part of Italy, and it was hopeless to expect that the peasants would betray him.

Marian's sympathy, however, had been fully aroused by the poverty of many of these families who lived in old, tottering houses, with dark, bare, windowless rooms, and showed so pitifully in their wasted forms and haggard faces, the lack of nourishing food. She resolved to aid them, even if she did not attain her own wishes. In Miss Radcliff she had an earnest coadjutor, although the dear old lady could make known her benevolent purposes only through the language of signs; which, however, since they were dictated by a loving heart, were easily understood. In a short time Marian learned to converse readily with her poor neighbors, and became acquainted with much of their history and mode of life, while a decided change for the better took place in many of their homes.

Returning from one of these visits she again met the peasant girl whose little blind brother Morton had saved at the ruins of Pompeii.

The girl had been leading a poor old donkey, with a load of oranges to sell, to the boatmen at the foot of the cliff. But in one of the steepest parts of the gorge the donkey had been crowded off the narrow path by a stronger companion, and had fallen over the bank, killing himself and crushing the whole load of fruit.

When found by Marian the young girl was leaning against the rocky wall, sobbing and wringing her hands in utter despair. Marian soon won her confidence and drew from her an explanation of her trouble.

Her name, she said, was Roberta Perroni, and she lived in a little house on the side of one of the mountains back of Sorrento. They owned two or three orange trees and one olive tree, and the fruit from these trees was all they had. Now her oranges were spoiled, and the old donkey was dead. Her father would beat her; but she did not mind that so much as having no medicine or food to take back to her little blind brother Tommaso, who was very sick.

Marian said she had seen her and her brother at Pompeii, and asked if he had been long sick. "Yes," replied Roberta, "he was taken ill very

soon after the Signor Americano saved him from being killed." She had been obliged to stay at home with him, and thus had lost her work at Pompeii.

Marian offered to go with her to her home and see what she could do to help them, if Roberta would conduct her safely back again.

The young Italian girl looked at her incredulously for a moment, then springing up dried her eyes on her wide apron, and said gratefully, "The beautiful signorina is too kind. But if she will come with me I can show her a shady lane, with high walls to keep off the hot sun, and I know she will help Tommaso."

As Roberta said, the lane was cool, but gloomy; and Marian was glad when the dark walls ceased, and in front of them rose a mountain, with olive trees and broad leaved aloes growing among the gray rocks. Just before they reached Roberta's home they passed a little half ruined chapel and a shrine, where once had been a fresco of the Madonna and child. Winter rains had defaced half the picture, and now only the divine child was left, framed in with tender ferns and shining ivy. Here, Roberta said, she always came to say her pray-

ers; and fresh flowers lying on the verdure-crowned wall gave touching proof of her devotion.

A little higher up the steep, narrow road, was the poor hut which Roberta called home, almost hidden from sight by a large olive tree. It stood upon the edge of a deep gorge, through which flowed a mountain torrent. Marian found the little blind boy lying upon a heap of dried grass and leaves, and covered with the tattered remains of a cloak. His large black eyes looked unearthly in his wasted face. Marian sat down by his side, and with her own hands she soaked some biscuit in wine she had brought, and fed him, while she talked in that gentle bright way of hers which immediately won confidence.

As she was thus employed, an old man came to the open door and looked in, unnoticed by the occupants of the room. He gave a sudden start; then a triumphant but malicious smile gleamed over his bad face, and turning quickly away, he hid himself behind the rocks where he could watch unseen.

Marian remained sometime chatting with the brother and sister, and quietly took note of the

things they needed most. But, reminding Roberta of her promise to conduct her back to Sorrento, she told the sick boy as she rose to go, that she would send him some medicine and some more food by his sister, and that as soon as he was well again, he must come and play on his mandolin and sing for her. Then she left the old house, unconscious that one was watching her who in the past had caused such a change in her destiny, and whose wicked brain was now weaving new plots against her, even while she was acting as a ministering angel to his own children.

During the weeks which Marian spent in Sorrento, she tried in every possible way to avoid meeting Morton. But there were often times when they were in the same company, and she could not help seeing the high standard that ruled his life, even while he mingled with strangers in a foreign land. He was often called "*Il Puritano*;" but although every one was compelled to respect the integrity and consistency of his conduct, there was no one more bright and genial than he, and his society was eagerly sought.

Marian was often forced to admit that Mor-

ton's sterling qualities were lamentably lacking in Radcliff. A man, though naturally well endowed, who has no object in life except his own pleasure, is sure to degenerate, if he is placed above all necessity for labor, and has no absorbing mental pursuit.

The desire to win Marian had been a strong restraint upon Harry, but old habits were now gradually asserting themselves. He was drawn into a circle of sporting, dissipated young men. At this time wine was often used to excess in social gatherings. In the past, Harry had seldom indulged so far as to lose self-control. But now his jealousy of Morton, and his growing conviction that he held Marian only by her faithfulness to her promise, made him miserable and reckless. He had sworn to himself that Marian should be his wife. He had never been thwarted in any wish before, and did not intend to be in this. Unconsciously, he had much the feeling of a hunter, to whom possession of the game becomes the more desirable when he fears that another may secure it. He was often moody and irritable, and when in Morton's company treated him in such an insolent manner, that Marian was in constant terror

of a quarrel, and took no pleasure in meeting her old friend.

But while Harry suspected what the struggle was costing both Marian and George, he argued with himself that he was acting only for her welfare. She would never find her parents. Mrs. Van Zandt's health was evidently failing. If he could only keep his hold upon Marian until he could get her away from Morton's influence, she would thank him after she became his wife, and realized how much better her position was than if she had married a poor struggling artist.

While George carefully avoided giving cause for jealousy, he could not help seeing how unworthy of her Radcliff was; and it added bitterness to his own loss to see the one being he had always loved, sacrifice herself to a man who would probably break her heart, and end his career in a drunkard's grave. Oh, was there no friend who could warn her? If she could not restrain her lover now, how could she hope to control him as a wife?

To Marian, these weeks were full of fierce mental conflict. Every day's intercourse with Harry proved how little their dispositions

harmonized, how far he was from entering into the aspirations from which she drew her chief pleasure. But Harry had come across the ocean solely for her sake, and she had allowed it. She had promised him the reward he craved, and she believed duty held her to that promise.

As is so often the case, Morton and many others outside of Harry's immediate circle, knew more of his dissipations than those within. But Marian suspected enough to believe that if she was false to her pledge he would become perfectly reckless, and that she would be the cause. This became a yoke, holding her with ever tightening power.

During the years of Mr. Van Zandt's sickness, when she had been passing through that severe discipline, self-renunciation had seemed easy; but now it evoked a struggle of which she had not believed her nature capable.

She felt almost certain that if she were free George would at once seek her—that an irresistible attraction would draw them together, Why should they resist it? Instinctively, when any grand or beautiful scene burst upon them, their eyes met in mutual appreciation

and sympathy. But suppose she had not seen George until after she was married, would these feelings justify her in breaking that tie? And was not the promise she had already made just as sacred? Oh, if she only knew where her duty lay! If there were only some one whose advice she could wholly trust!

CHAPTER XXII.

PLOTS AND COUNTERPLOTS.

LORD LYLE had promised Ethel Delaney a picture. He therefore started out one morning with all his paraphernalia of camp stool, canvas and paints, and meeting Radcliff taking a stroll, asked him to accompany him to the grounds of an old monastery, where he intended to make his sketch.

"You shall have some English papers," said Lyle, "and a good cigar to while away the time, if you will give me the pleasure of your company."

"This is a new departure, is it not?" asked Harry, accepting the cigar, as he turned with the Englishman toward the old ruin.

"No, my tastes are very artistic. I take great delight in reproducing nature. Of course, I would never condescend to compete with

professional artists. I use my gift solely for my own pleasure, or as a gratification to my friends."

Radcliff could hardly repress a smile, for he had heard that Lyle's want of talent was only equaled by his inordinate self-conceit. However, in a man of his rank such peccadilloes were readily excused; and there were enough, like Ethel Delaney, who for the sake of flattery, fostered his vanity, and called his burlesques upon nature *chef d'ouuvres* of art.

When they reached the old monastery, and Lyle had selected his position and arranged his easel and canvas, Harry saw that they had been followed by the same Italian beggars who had so persistently annoyed them at Pompeii; but now, these were accompanied by another. He expected that they would come up, and again begin their whining for charity; but they stood resting against the old wall where they could watch the two gentlemen, and made no attempt to draw nearer.

As the painting progressed, with most glaring defects in shading and perspective, Harry hoped he would not be called upon to deliver his opinion; and to forestall this he said: "My

fair countrywoman seems to have been quite successful in her angling, my lord. Are you really caught, or are you only playing around the golden bait?"

"Did you think she could capture me? No, no; I'm not ready to surrender my bachelor freedom yet. If she possessed the charms of your fiancée, I might be in danger, but her maneuvers and her mamma's simply amuse me. If I were seriously contemplating either daughter as a good matrimonial speculation, I should prefer Clara. Ethel has too strong a will of her own. She would insist upon having something to say in the disposal of her father's ducats. But Clara would prove a good, submissive wife, whom you could easily convince that black was white, and she wouldn't bother you with any questions as to how the money was spent. I am making some inquiries as to the true state of her father's finances, for I've lost some heavy bets lately, and it might be well for me to extricate myself in this way if things came to the worst. You see I talk out very frankly to you, as you well know that there would be no question of sentiment on either part. It would be simply money in exchange

for rank, though of course the farce of love-making must be gone through with.

"I've had my suspicions that, like some other countrymen of yours whom I have met on the continent, there may be only a gilded shell, with nothing solid beneath. Can you give me any accurate information on that subject?"

"As far as I know," said Radcliff, "Mr. Delaney possesses solid wealth; though in our country the wheel of Fortune takes so many sudden whirls, one can not always tell who is atop or how long he may stay there."

"By the by," replied Lyle, "I hear that Miss Van Zandt is also an heiress. You need not look so indignant; I know that you are truly in love, and I am not surprised. She could bring any man a willing captive to her feet. But if I were you, Radcliff, I'd make sure of her by getting the noose securely tied. If I'm not mistaken, that conceited, puritanical artist, Morton, is as much in love with her as you; and from some words and looks I've noticed pass between them, I think you are very blind if you don't get her out of his way—or get him out of yours."

Radcliff's face darkened, and springing to

his feet, he said with an oath, "The fellow had better be careful how he becomes my rival. He's a perfect snake in the grass, Lyle. I have repeatedly tried to provoke a quarrel and gain a pretext for a challenge; but he is so sly in his attentions that I can not openly accuse him without risking my own hold upon Miss Van Zandt. He did her some service when she was a child, and now presumes upon that to claim her friendship."

"Why do you remain here? Can't you marry and take her away?"

"I can not persuade her either to leave this place or marry me till she is convinced that she will never find her parents. Besides, the physicians say Mrs. Van Zandt must remain all winter in this climate. So you see the difficulties of my position." And Radcliff threw himself down upon the grassy seat which he had been occupying, and began to smoke another cigar in moody silence.

After a time Lyle looked up from his painting and said: "I hate Morton as truly as you do, though for other reasons. But we'll both watch for an opportunity to give him a challenge. Do you believe he'll fight?"

"How can he refuse unless he wishes to be stigmatized forever as a coward? and he is not that. Still, I know he has had very little practice in fencing, or with pistols. So our chances of getting rid of him are very fair, if we can only bring him to an honorable combat."

"Good. I'll stand by you in this; and you can trust me for offering him such an insult as no gentleman can overlook, and still retain the title."

While this plot was being formed, the subject of their conversation was seated not far away, engaged in sketching the same group of lazzaroni which Radcliff had noticed. Their attitude and dress was so characteristic, and their countenances expressed such intense interest as they talked, that George worked with eager haste to catch their varying expressions; especially that of the old man, whose strong but bad face made him believe that he had been, or was still, one of the brigands who had always infested the mountains of that region. With strong, nervous strokes he drew life-like portraits of the group, which he intended to use in a painting suggested at once by their appearance. But he would scarcely have

worked upon this design with the same artistic fervor, if he could have overheard their low conversation ; for in this intricate life of ours the threads of our destiny often become strangely entangled with that of others.

Yet the reader can draw near enough to catch their words.

" No, no, Guiseppe," said the old man. " You are a fool if you capture either milord or the Signor Americano. Milord, I happen to know, is about ruined with rouge et noir, and he'll not pay his debts by the sale of his pictures," he added, with a low chuckle. " Il Americano is better game. But we'll squeeze the most out of him by stealing his lady-love. Let us once get her in our possession and we can make our own terms."

" But how can we do that? I'm running a great risk to meet you here. We could not go nearer the town, and I don't see any chance of catching her away from him. Why not take both ; then let him go to secure the ransom ?"

" Leave me to find out a way to get her alone into our possession. But you see there is great risk in this business ; and if I take it I must have one-half of the ransom."

"Diavolo, old man! you are very modest in your demands I must say!" exclaimed Guiseppe.

"You can't get what you want without me, and I'll not risk it except at that bargain," replied the old man coolly.

The other remained silent a time, then said, "Come, Beppo, we must talk this over with the rest first;" and turning again to the old man he said, "We'll meet again next week as you say, and give you our answer."

Here the group broke up, scattering in different directions; and the old man approaching Radcliff and Lyle, began in his usual whining tone to beg for a few pence to keep him from starving.

George also rose to his feet and then, discovering the other men, but not wishing to meet either of them, slipped away unperceived.

When he returned to his studio, he immediately began painting the picture which had become so vivid to his imagination. Before his fancy rose a lonely forest camp, and by a blazing fire he placed the group of men he had been sketching. They had just returned with their plunder, and had laid it at the feet of the

old man whom Morton had chosen to represent as their leader, "The King of the Mountains." These were in the foreground, and a few other figures grouped about, some just dimly outlined in the circle beyond the firelight, completed the picture.

For several days he worked diligently at the canvas. He was busily engaged one morning giving the finishing touches to his old chieftain, when there came a knock at the door of his studio.

On opening it he was surprised to see quite a group of visitors. Mrs. Delaney stood nearest, and said in her most gracious manner, "Will you allow some intruders this morning, Mr. Morton? We all want to see the spot where these beautiful creations of your brain are brought into existence."

"Walk in, friends, I am very happy to receive you here," said George, giving each a cordial greeting; but especially pleased when he saw that Marian was among the number.

"We met Miss Radcliff and Miss Van Zandt upon the old Roman bridge over that deep ravine you know, and we insisted upon their coming with us," said Mrs. Delaney.

"I've always wanted to see the inside of a real artist's work-room; so I did not need much coaxing. I'll promise to keep my hands off where the paint isn't dry; and if an old woman's curiosity carries her too far you must hold it in check," said Miss Radcliff, her black eyes sparkling with a kindly humor which at once won a genial response.

"Indeed, Miss Radcliff, I give you free permission to examine all my treasures. As you say, this is my work-room; and you'll find a very miscellaneous collection, mostly sketches for future use."

But his pictures were advantageously arranged to give them the best light, and his own fine figure was well set off by his dove-colored painting blowse, and a dark maroon velvet cap.

Ethel and Clara Delaney were accompanied by two English girls, and the four immediately began their gushing exclamations; mainly in French, as if to imply an admiration too strong for the English language to express.

Mr. and Mrs. Delaney looked about very critically, and asked the price of various pictures, intending to purchase one to adorn their parlor at home. George answered

their questions with what patience he could ; but he longed to be able to show Marian the pictures he valued most, and to see what impression they gave her, feeling that her opinion would be worth more to him than any verdict the world could give. After a time he came up as she and Miss Radcliff were standing in front of the picture he had been at work upon when they arrived.

"What do you think of my King of the Mountains, Miss Van Zandt?"

"Oh, Mr. Morton!" cried Marian, looking up with pale cheeks and startled eyes. "Is that old man's face a fancy sketch? I'm sure I've seen it before."

"It is very possible, for he is one of those professional beggars that hang around all foreigners." George then related how he had happened to sketch the group, a few days before.

Marian looked at the picture with a shudder as she said, "I remember now. I saw that man at Pompeii, and his face then affected me in the same strange manner."

"How?" asked George, anxiously.

"Why, he gave me the impression of one

having some baleful influence over my life, either in the past, or in some way yet to come."

"My dear! I did not think you were so superstitious!" said Miss Radcliff, with laughing reproach.

"Please show me something else, Mr. Morton," said Marian, turning toward the other pictures.

"Here is a small painting, Miss Van Zandt, which is a pleasanter theme."

In a dense forest was a beautiful arbor formed by fallen trees, over which the American ivy hung in scarlet and golden drapery. Partly covered by this, on the green moss lay a little girl fast asleep. Brown rings of hair curled round her sweet face, and a happy smile curved her lips, as if pleasant dreams had come to visit her. Just outside the arbor blazed a bright wood fire, throwing strange gleams far down the dusky forest aisles, and seated on a log by the fire was an old man smoking his pipe and whittling a child's toy, while the eyes of wolves, their savage forms but faintly revealed, glared through the darkness beyond.

"Oh, I remember that spot! What a perfect likeness of old Malcolm Grant!"

“I wondered if you would recognize it,” said George, bending upon her a sad, intent gaze.

Remember it! Alas! how distinctly she recalled that holiday with him upon the prairie, their escape from the fire, and the night camp. But just then an exclamation from Ethel made them all turn to look. She had lifted a curtain from the wall, and revealed to them hanging under it a copy of the picture of the young girl upon the cross, which Marian had seen at Rome.

“Why, Marian! when did you sit for this?” asked Ethel.

Morton’s face flushed; then grew very pale, as he came forward and said, “Miss Van Zandt has never honored me with a sitting. That picture is a copy of one I painted while in Rome; but I acknowledge there is some resemblance.”

“Why, it is a perfect likeness!” said Ethel, looking very suspiciously from George to Marian. She, however, was now examining a painting on the opposite side of the room, and George soon succeeded in concentrating the attention of his visitors upon a group of Italian boys, which Mr. Delaney had selected to purchase as his choice.

Marian longed to leave the studio, for her heart beat with painful rapidity as she recognized in the brief glance at the picture to which Ethel had called their attention, a still stronger resemblance to herself than in the one she had seen at Rome.

She could not help seeing in this visit to his studio how much Morton still thought of her; and there was both pain and joy in the discovery. But these feelings made her now still more anxious to get away, and she quietly whispered to Mrs. Delaney: "I am sorry to hurry you, but I fear mamma will become alarmed at our long absence."

After profuse thanks for the courtesy George had shown them, the Delaney party finally drove off, carrying Marian and Miss Radcliff with them. But George could not resume his painting. He therefore prepared for a long tramp, taking his sketch-book and saying to himself that he would improve the pleasant day in the open air. In reality, he spent the hours in going over all his past intercourse with Marian, only to make still more bitter the thought of what might have been.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE CHALLENGE.

MRS. DELANEY was active in arranging excursions about Sorrento; and early in February she proposed a visit to the Caves of the Sirens, and a lunch on the rocks near Punta del Capo, where were the ruins of Queen Joanna's baths; the beautiful queen whose portrait was painted by Leonardo da Vinci.

A large party of English and American ladies and gentlemen were invited, and low boats with white triangular sails and rowlocks for four oarsmen, were in readiness for them.

That morning, Harry Radcliff with Lord Lyle and some mutual friends, had gone to witness a race, and had engaged to join the party at the spot chosen for their lunch. So it happened to Marian's surprise that she found herself seated in a boat with Uncle Aleck, opposite Morton and Clara Delaney. Her

mamma was now taking great pains to throw Clara and the distinguished American artist together, and thought that since Marian was already engaged, she could safely place Clara in that position.

It seemed to Marian, as she was gently wafted over the placid sea, that she had never seen a more beautiful prospect. A soft aerial mist veiled the distant mountains; the water was of the deepest azure; the air was balmy as June, and both she and George yielded to the enchantment of the hour, and forgot all else in the consciousness of each other's presence.

"Wasn't the poet Tasso born in Sorrento?" asked Mr. Allen, as they looked back to the city, crowning the steep promontory with its white walled dwellings and orange groves.

"Yes," replied George. "He spent the happiest years of his life there, with his sister Cornelia, after he had written his 'Jerusalem Delivered.'"

"Were any of the great painters natives of Sorrento or Naples?" asked Clara.

"Salvator Rosa was born in a small hamlet a short distance from Naples. I can't remember any others. There is a story still told here of

the severe flagellation he received from the monks for his first church decoration. His parents were very poor, and his early attempts at landscape drawing were made with a burned stick. This he carried to church one day, and instead of counting his beads, began drawing a picture on the wall. So absorbed was he that he did not notice that the service had ended, and the monks came out and caught him. I hope they all lived to see the day when nobles and kings vied with each other for possession of his works. But look, Miss Van Zandt, Miss Delaney, we are just about to enter one of the Sirens' caves. Are the Sirens all gone, do you think?"

"I imagine we have them in the boat with us to-day," said Uncle Aleck, bowing to Miss Clara, with stately, old-fashioned gallantry. She smiled back and looked at George, but his eyes were fastened upon Marian in sad longing, as if she had been more fatal to his peace than any enchantress of the sea.

The sails were lowered, and the boats passed through a narrow channel into a lofty grotto, the liquid pavement of which, blue as sapphire and clear as crystal, stretched far into the cliff,

and threw a strange light upon the rocky walls.

"I don't wonder that those ancient people thought these caves the abodes of supernatural beings. Just fancy the enchantress Circe sitting on that ledge, and weaving that coral sea-moss among her long tresses," said Marian, bending over and letting the blue water ripple through her fingers. George grasped some of the graceful weed, and, handing it to her, said, "Try the effect with your own dark hair." She took the spray and carelessly twined it in and out, letting it droop over one shoulder; then glancing up, she met a look which sent a richer color to her face than that of any coral moss, but which instantly changed to pallor, as she said with a shiver:

"I can't wear it. It gives me a chill. You remember the old story—how she metamorphosed men to brutes. Let us leave this ill-omened spot."

Miss Delaney was not eager to remain either, so once more they emerged into the warm sunlight of the bay, and again the sails were set for Punta del Capo. Here they passed under an irregular arch, and entered a wide space

surrounded by walls of rock and roofed by the sky. Far down in the clear, deep water they could see crumbling masonry, overgrown with green, pink and brown seaweed, while crabs and little silvery-finned fishes swam over what once had been the marble floors of palaces.

"What changes! what changes time brings!" sighed Uncle Aleck. "Where are the owners who once trod these paved courts?"

"I suppose their experience was much the same as ours," replied Marian, and added in her thoughts: "I doubt not there were as perplexing problems to be met then as now, and as many heartaches. Yet the end came at last, and for many a century the cold waters have closed over them."

George looked at her beautiful face so full of sadness, and said to himself: "Is it possible that one so richly endowed, one with such high aspirations, can really love a man like Radcliff? What could have been the attraction? Certainly not his wealth. O, that I had never left her! I would now give all the fame I possess, or ever shall, to save her from the fate I fear for her if she marries him. I could meet my own loss better if I knew she was happy. I can

see that she is suffering, yet I am utterly powerless to help her, or ascertain the real source of her trouble. Sometimes I think, if she were free, I still might win her. Then her manner toward her lover is so gentle, so confiding, I believe her whole heart is his, even while she is forced to see his faults. I must leave Sorrento—I dare not keep meeting her in this way. I can not trust my self-control. I shall forget my manhood. If I could only find some trace of her parents! But there seems no chance here. I'll go to England and see if I can find the gentleman who once owned that villa. I may at least seek her happiness so."

These thoughts were passing through Morton's mind in a deep undercurrent, as he listened with respectful attention to Miss Delaney's remarks.

After some search, the men found an available landing place on the rocky coast, and the whole party left their boats and ascended the cliff by an easy path to the spot chosen for their lunch.

When Radcliff joined Marian, she saw him for the first time so much under the influence of wine as to be scarcely conscious of his words

or actions. A deep flush of shame dyed her cheeks as she fully realized his condition ; and she tried to draw him as far as possible from the notice of others.

The ladies prepared their rural feast upon a broad flat rock, and the gentlemen gathered around them in little groups, laughing and chatting merrily. But the same party of young men with whom Radcliff had attended the races soon became so boisterous as greatly to disturb the pleasure of the rest of the company. Among them was Lord Lyle. Leaving his companions, he suddenly interrupted Morton, who was talking with a friend, saying in an insolent voice, "See here, Morton, I've just been told that you said I was neither an artist nor a gentleman. Now, sir, you must take that back, or I must demand satisfaction."

"I have said nothing about you, Lord Lyle, that requires an apology."

"Do you deny having made such a remark?"

George looked up and replied in a cool tone, "I never made any comment upon your paintings. I did say, sir, that any man who lost his self-control, and used profane language in the

presence of ladies, was no gentleman. If that applied to yourself I am not responsible."

Morton then turned to the friend with whom he had been conversing ; but Lyle swaggering up between them, again interrupted him, saying, "You needn't think you'll escape me with such a cowardly lie as that. I've good authority for what you did say. Besides, I consider your last remark the greatest insult of all. I demand satisfaction!"

"I can give you no such satisfaction as you seek, my lord," said Morton.

"No satisfaction!" cried Radcliff fiercely, springing to his feet. "Do you think you can insult a gentleman in this public manner and give no satisfaction?"

Marian laid her hand on Harry's arm with an imploring gesture. Her face was deathly pale, and her dark eyes burned. George saw the act and look, and thought bitterly, "She is afraid he too will be involved." He also saw that nearly every one present, while regretting the quarrel and feeling indignant at Lord Lyle's unprovoked attack, felt that Morton's own honor demanded the acceptance of the challenge.

This was an age in which dueling was very common. Most men, even in high political positions, while regretting the necessity, were willing to fight rather than have their courage called in question. It was therefore no easy task to repeat before such a company :

“ I can not give you such satisfaction.”

Here Lyle caught up a glass of wine and threw its contents in Morton's face, saying in a taunting voice, “ Take that, then, you contemptible Yankee—you miserable, cowardly son of a blacksmith.”

George rose to his feet, his face and eyes blazing with passion, and as he took a step forward with uplifted and clinched hand it seemed as if he would fell his adversary to the earth. But in that instant he paused, his hand loosened and fell quietly by his side. When he looked up there was a light in his eyes which the other dared not meet, as he said with clear voice :

“ My father, sir, was a Western pioneer. But he was also a sober man and a Christian. I too am a Christian. Therefore I will neither take your life, nor risk my own, in a contemptible quarrel like this. If that is cowardly, I

stand convicted ;" and for a moment, from the height of his commanding figure he looked down upon the puny lord, who instinctively cowered before him.

During this pause not a word was spoken. A cricket chirping at their feet, and the soft splash of the waves on the rocks, alone broke the stillness; till Marian said in a low voice, "Better is he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city." The involuntary utterance of these words really gave expression to the secret thoughts of all. George turned quickly, and again their glances met—soul answering to soul as though the veil of flesh no longer intervened.

Lord Lyle's conduct had so completely destroyed all social harmony that, by mutual consent, the company began immediate preparations for departure, and George saw no more of Marian, as she returned with her lover in another boat.

Radcliff realized that he had made a false move, and had lost so much influence over Marian that he feared for the result. As soon as they reached the villa she excused herself upon the plea of fatigue, and sought her room.

There she found a scarcely legible note from Roberta Perroni, saying that if she would come to their hut about sunset that evening, she would meet there an old woman who said she knew all about her father. Roberta promised to conduct her safely home, but said she must come alone, as the woman refused to see any one else.

Marian felt no suspicion of danger, for she had told Roberta that she was seeking her parents from whom she had been stolen. The peasant girl had frequently come to the villa since Marian's visit to her home, and had probably left this note when she found the young lady absent.

Full of the hope that at last her long search was to be rewarded with success, Marian prepared for her visit to the lonely hut.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE BRIGANDS.

MARIAN threw a long dark cloak over her light dress, and left the house by a rear entrance, first requesting a servant whom she met to inform Mrs. Van Zandt of her destination. She said she might not return until after sunset ; but they were not to be alarmed, as Roberta would see her safely home. Marian knew that if her purpose was announced, she would not be allowed to go alone ; and not realizing the possibility of danger, she had an intense longing for this solitary walk, after her recent excitement.

She took a secluded path through an orange grove behind the villa, and walked rapidly, fearful lest Harry or Mr. Allen might see and insist upon accompanying her. As she threaded the narrow streets of the old town, and sought the walled lane through which Roberta had conducted her before, she tried to still the

anxious beating of her heart, and repeated to herself: "This woman may be simply an impostor, hoping to obtain money." She resolved to be very guarded, and to require conclusive evidence of the truth of the story.

Having reached this decision, Marian's thoughts turned again to the painful experiences of the day.

She was thankful when she entered the gloomy lane, and met only a few peasants, who took no notice of the slight, dark-robed figure. Tears had often forced their way down her pale cheeks, fight against them as she would. Here, with her veil drawn, she let them take their course.

She realized that a crisis had been reached; but the tumult of doubt as to what she ought to do was even greater than before. It was not the sacrifice of her own happiness only. She knew that if she married Harry with her present feelings, it would be a sin. She dared not go to the altar and utter vows which she knew to be false. But what could she say to him? The consciousness that her whole heart had gone out to Morton, unsought by any word of love on his part, made her face burn with shame,

even when there was no eye to see. How could she bear Radcliff's taunting accusations, after she should tell him that her engagement must be broken? He would never believe that it was in any measure the result of his own conduct. With painful vividness the scene of the challenge came before her; and she again contrasted the character of the two men. How brave, how grand, Morton had seemed when he not only won the victory over himself, but compelled the respect and admiration of those most bitterly opposed to him! For a moment her face glowed with joy, as she remembered the look he had bent upon her when he heard her low spoken words. The thought of that made her feel sure he loved her. The truth had been revealed in glances and tones which he could not disguise; and to which he might not give utterance while she was bound to another.

How humiliating she now felt that tie! As she recalled Radcliff's recent conduct, her eyes flashed, and her hands clinched each other passionately under her cloak, as she said to herself, "I am glad I still have the power to regain my freedom." But her anger changed to grief as she continued her soliloquy, "Oh, if I could

only find my own parents, and have their counsel and support! Mamma sees no fault in Harry. Neither does his dear old aunty. How can I tell them what will cause such grief? And if Harry becomes wholly reckless and throws himself away, his aunt will always feel that I was to blame. How hard it is to know what is right! If sacrificing my own happiness could save Harry, I would still remain constant to him in spite of every thing. But would he value constancy without love?" Then she cried, in the anguish of her soul: "Oh, if I could only see my duty! I am groping in the dark. To whom can I turn for counsel and help! I do not ask happiness for myself. I only pray that I may be able to renounce every thing, suffer any thing, if only I can thereby do what is right in God's sight."

By this time she had passed beyond the dark lane, and the flood of glorious light which suddenly burst upon her as she came out on the side of the mountain, seemed an instant promise of the spiritual light for which she had been so passionately pleading. The sun was just dipping behind a Cyclopean waste of rocky hills which were towering far up in

the western sky. Their fantastic forms were scarred by deep shadows, while over all the wide landscape, and upon every wave and ripple of the bay, the sunlight was pouring masses of gold, violet, purple, and crimson, with the pure, intense blue of the zenith melting through them. She stood for a moment spell-bound by the grandeur of this scene, drawing from it comfort and strength; then she went on with a lighter step and a lighter heart to Roberta's home.

When she arrived there, great was her surprise to find neither Roberta nor the woman whom she had expected to meet. Marian opened the door and entered, hoping at least that Tommaso was waiting to explain Roberta's absence, but the place was entirely deserted. She would sit down, she thought, and wait a few moments. Perhaps the woman had failed to come, and Roberta had gone for her. Marian had walked fast, and the varied experiences of the day had already so greatly fatigued her, that she sank down upon an old bench, thankful for even that resting-place.

Here she waited, listening anxiously for some sound. But the minutes slipped by, and except

the monotonous roar of the torrent as it leaped down the rocky gorge, perfect silence surrounded her. The sun had entirely disappeared, and, as is usual in that region, the season of twilight was very brief. She started up in alarm, when she realized that night had closed upon her while she was so far from home.

Just then she heard approaching foot-steps, and her heart gave a great bound of relief; but it sank with terror when, instead of the young peasant girl, she instantly recognized the old man who had so alarmed her at Pompeii. He was followed by six other wild, fierce-looking men, carrying muskets. Their faces were black with dirt; and their dress, originally gay, had become so discolored by wind and weather as to give them a still more revolting aspect.

The old man approached Marian and said, with the sinister smile which she remembered so well, "I am sorry, signorina, that Roberta has failed to keep her appointment. But we have come in her place."

"Who are you? Who are these men?" she cried, retreating from him with sickening fear.

"I am Roberta's father, and these are my friends."

"My God! how could Roberta lead me into this trap," gasped Marian, as she fully realized the danger of her position, and her utter helplessness in that lonely mountain hut. But instantly summoning all her presence of mind, she gave a quick glance around the room to see if there was any possible escape. She was standing close by an open casement, outside of which was a frail wooden balcony hanging over the deep gorge already described.

As several of the brigands advanced toward her, with the quickness of thought she sprung out upon this old platform. It creaked and trembled beneath her weight, as if it would let her fall into the whirling water so far below. At this act the brigands rushed forward, uttering fierce cries and curses in their fear of losing her, but the captain of the band motioned them back, and advanced to the window alone.

"If you come a step nearer, I'll throw myself off," cried the young girl, her face pale as death, but her dauntless eyes meeting his with steady, unwavering purpose.

"Signorina," he said in an eager, even defer-

ential tone, "don't be so alarmed. Come back, I beseech you. Those boards are rotten. You shall be our prisoner till your friends pay the ransom we demand ; but I can assure you that you will be safe in our camp, and will be treated with perfect respect. As soon as you arrive there, you shall write a letter to your lover, telling him where you are, and that you can obtain your freedom by the payment of fifty thousand lire. This he can easily pay, as we know he is very rich, and would give any thing to rescue his beautiful lady-love. The letter will be sent at once, and when we receive the money you shall be brought back here unharmed."

"If he pays promptly," added some of the others, now pressing toward the window.

"Keep back ! keep back !" cried Marian, "I will never be taken alive."

Just at this juncture Roberta entered the hut and suddenly stood in the midst of the excited group. The men started with surprise, and her father grasped her roughly, and said with an oath, "I told you never to come here again."

But the captain of the brigands, after convincing himself that there was no one with her,

and that she now might prove useful to him, said to Perroni, "Let her alone. Roberta, I want you to make the signorina understand that if she will go with us, and write to her friends for the ransom as I have told her, she will suffer no other inconvenience. Tell her I intend you to go with her and share her captivity."

Marian believed Roberta had purposely deceived her; but now, the peasant girl leaned forward and grasped her hand with a significant pressure, while she looked with equal meaning into her eyes, as she answered the captain in a careless manner: "Yes, I'll go with the signorina. It will only be for a few days; there's no use making such a fuss. Signor Radcliff can easily pay the ransom."

Encouraged by the presence of another woman, and gaining from Roberta's manner fresh hope, Marian consented to re-enter the hut and accompany the brigands, trusting that their greed for the large sum they demanded would protect her from insult.

The men, feeling that more time had been lost than they could well risk so near the town, hurried their departure. Roberta walked by

Marian's side along the rough path, holding her hand in a strong clasp, but unable to whisper a word unheard by the men who surrounded them.

They had ascended the steep mountain road but a short distance, when Marian's strength seemed to desert her utterly, "I can walk no further," she said in a low tone to Roberta.

"You must keep up a little longer," her companion whispered back. "I hope for a rescue. I never deceived you. I'll never leave you. Lean all your weight upon me." A curve in the path enabled Roberta to say these words unnoticed by their captors, and they gave new strength to the exhausted girl, who struggled on over the rocks and tufts of thorny shrubs.

But suddenly there came a flash, and the reports of muskets. One of the men in front fell, as his companions cried, "The gendarmes, the gendarmes are upon us," and fled in different directions. The captain caught up Marian, and attempted to escape with her; but had not run a dozen paces when he was struck down, and fell heavily forward, throwing Marian also to the ground.

It was George Morton who had rescued her,

and now tenderly lifted her in his arms. Roberta came instantly to his side. As he looked into Marian's white face he said, in a tone of anguish, "Oh, she is dead. I have killed her too."

"No, signor; I believe she is only stunned. Let us carry her back to our hut. I was so afraid you would not get here in time."

The soldiers who had accompanied George chased the fleeing brigands a short distance; then returned and gathered around those who had fallen. One was shot dead, and the captain and Roberta's father were severely wounded. These the gendarmes carried with them as prisoners to Sorrento. Morton requested a small guard to follow him, and with Marian's unconscious form in his arms, he strode rapidly back to Roberta's home.

As soon as he reached the hut he placed Marian on some straw, over which Roberta had thrown an old coverlet, and began to bathe her face and hands; meanwhile, in his thoughts calling her by every endearing name which could give expression to his love.

Presently he saw some tokens of reviving consciousness. His heart ached with suspense,

and he said to himself, "How will she meet me? How will she feel when she knows that I rescued her?"

Soon the dark orbs opened upon him, but alas, with no look of recognition! the strain had been too severe, the shock too great. Marian had come back to life, but with a frenzied brain. She started up with a wild, imploring cry; and believing herself still standing on the tottering balcony above that awful chasm, she clutched at the air as if striving to clasp the trembling railing; while one moment she commanded the brigands to keep back, and the next called upon her lover and mother in agonizing entreaty to come and rescue her; repeating over and over, "Fifty thousand lire. Quick, quick, Harry, or it will be too late. The boards are rotten, and I am falling, falling, falling!" her voice at each repetition more full of terror and anguish.

Morton's agony was almost equal to her own when he found that no assurance of her safety could bring relief to her poor distracted mind. Where was the lover she so wildly called to her aid? How could he have allowed her to risk the danger of seeking this hut unattended?

Morton's heart burned with fierce anger against his rival, as he listened to her pitiful cries.

He had sent word by one of the gendarmes, for a carriage and physician to come out at once to the hut. Before the messages could have been delivered, another carriage was driven rapidly to the door, and in a few moments Mr. Allen and Miss Radcliff entered.

"Where is Marian? Oh! what has happened?" they cried, as they approached the young girl, who was sitting up, gazing wildly about her with eyes that saw only the fierce brigands, as she still shrieked for help.

"She has had a terrible fright, which I fear has brought on brain fever," said Morton, in reply to their questions. "She was seized by a party of brigands, but Tommaso, Roberta's little brother, had overheard his father's plot for her capture, and told Roberta in time for her to warn me. I secured the aid of the gendarmes and fortunately rescued her before she was beyond our reach. She is now suffering from the shock, and you had better get her home at once. Where's Radcliff? How could he let her run such a risk?" exclaimed George, turning almost fiercely upon Harry's aunt.

"Oh, my nephew is not to blame!" cried the old lady, in great distress. "Marian stole away, telling no one but a servant where she was going. The girl forgot the message until we missed the dear child, and not finding her in her room, became alarmed."

"But where is Mr. Radcliff now?" asked Morton sternly.

"I don't know," said his aunt. "I have not seen him this evening. Have you, Mr. Allen?"

"Yes, he has gone to Naples, and will not be home until to-morrow. I agree with you, Mr. Morton. The sooner we get Marian home and under a doctor's care the better. God bless you for saving her from a worse fate," he faltered, with white, trembling lips as he wrung George's hand.

"O, Mr. Morton! I know how Harry will feel when he learns what a debt of gratitude he owes you," cried Miss Radcliff, the tears streaming down her pale cheeks.

Morton's eyes burned with indignation, as she thus referred to her nephew, for when he learned that Radcliff had gone to Naples, he was convinced that it was as a guest at a wine

and card party given by the same young men with whom he had been spending the most of the past day. Mr. Hurlbert had spoken to Morton on their return to Sorrento of an invitation which he had declined, and had mentioned his regret that Radcliff chose such associates.

Bitter words rose to Morton's lips: but as he looked at the frail, trembling old lady before him, and heard Marian's piteous call upon her lover for the ransom, he said to himself: "They love him. What right have I to speak? What will it avail?"

So crushing back his own pain, he turned to Mr. Allen and said, "If you will see that the carriage is ready, I will bring Miss Van Zandt and place her in it. I think she had better be accompanied by Roberta, to whom she clings so closely. I can assure you this girl is not responsible for what has occurred to-night."

Roberta readily consented to this arrangement; but when George attempted to remove Marian to the carriage, she, imagining him one of the brigands, refused to allow his approach. The peasant girl pushed him aside with a laugh; and catching Marian up in her strong

arms, carried her out as if she had been a child.

All through that anxious ride, and during the weeks of sickness that followed, Roberta's voice alone had any power to soothe the distress of the sufferer, whose bewildered thoughts still clung to the memory of the young girl's promised help; and in her presence she felt a sense of security.

CHAPTER XXV.

TWO WAYS OF MEETING TROUBLE.

WHEN Morton entered his room late that night, he saw lying on the table a letter from Colonel Haywood, and, when he tore it open, to his surprise found it dated at Paris.

The colonel wrote that he had married Mrs. Warren, and had come with his wife to Paris. A very few months had disclosed the cold, selfish and mercenary character of the woman whom he had chosen. She had accepted him merely for the sake of his wealth. She really cared for nothing but the excitement of admiration and society. She utterly refused to live at the fort where he was stationed, and had persuaded him to resign his commission, and bring her to Europe. He had loved and trusted her so truly, that, although Marian had warned him, he would not believe her utterly false until their life in Paris had convinced him

beyond doubt. He had lately met with heavy losses and was in deep trouble. He had heard that George was still in Sorrento, and wrote that if he could come to him at once, it would be the greatest kindness.

George felt at first that he could not go away while Marian was in such a critical condition. Yet his debt of gratitude to Colonel Haywood, independently of his strong regard, made this request an imperative call. As the conviction forced itself upon him that he must start the very next day, he threw down the letter and paced the room for hours, struggling with the torrent of passion that was surging within him as he thought of his successful rival. Why should that pampered son of Fortune, that idle, frivolous man, who had never known an ungratified wish, win the one treasure for which Morton had toiled all these years? Must he go away now? Ought he not to warn Mrs. Van Zandt or Mr. Allen of Radcliff's disreputable associates? If this engagement could only be broken might there not still be hope for him? Yet, if Marian loved Radcliff, he could not win her even in that case. George believed that in the ravings of delirium the heart reveals

its true feelings without restraint, and as he still seemed to hear Marian's pleading cry for her lover he felt overwhelmed with despair.

He recalled the first time he had seen her, a little child on the prairie, the circumstances which followed, and her devoted affection for him during their life at that Western fort; and he moaned, "Why, oh, why, did I leave America!" He thought of the years of toil, when every hope had centered on her, and his highest ambition had been to win fame for her sake. What should he do now with his future? There seemed nothing worth living or working for since his chief incentive to action was gone, and his hope dead.

In such a crisis many a soul has thrown duty and life away, and has rushed recklessly into the awful unknown; or lacking courage for that, has tried to drown its misery by plunging into dissipation.

But the Christian manhood of George Morton raised him above such base temptations. He remembered that Christ's dying bequest was not happiness but *peace*.

This he now sought in his deep need, and with it he sought for light on his path. He

did not seek in vain. Although for the time all barriers had been borne down before that fierce tempest of passion, he now saw his duty plainly, and ere morning came was prepared to follow it.

As soon as his preparations were made for the journey, he rode out to Mrs. Van Zandt's villa, and asked to see that lady. In a short time Miss Radcliff entered the salon, and, apologizing for coming in her friend's place said that the shock of Marian's danger, and her present alarming condition, had so prostrated Mrs. Van Zandt that she could see no one.

"Is Miss Van Zandt no better?" asked George, his face blanching with fear that she might never recover her reason.

"She is still delirious and begs Harry to save her from the brigands," replied Miss Radcliff. "But Roberta seems to have some power to soothe her, and she has such a vigorous constitution that the physicians think she will recover. They are very anxious for my nephew's return, believing that his presence will bring relief. But we received a message from Harry this morning saying that unexpected business would detain him some days

longer at Naples. Mr. Allen started at once to tell him what had happened and bring him back."

As Miss Radcliff said this she looked steadily in George's face, for she resented the manner in which he had spoken of her nephew on the previous evening. She regarded as unjust any imputation concerning Harry's honor and his love for Marian. Morton now thought that he might possibly have misjudged Radcliff, and that it really might be business, and not the card-party, which had taken him to Naples.

Rising to go, he said, "I have just received an unexpected summons to Paris. Colonel Haywood, my old benefactor and friend, is there and writes me that he is in deep trouble, and wishes me to come to him at once. I regret exceedingly that I am obliged to leave while Miss Van Zandt is so ill. You know the circumstances of my acquaintance with her as a child, Miss Radcliff. No sister could have been dearer to me when I parted from her, and she entered Mr. Van Zandt's home. For her sake alone I submitted to that separation. I count it now my greatest happiness to have been able to serve her last night, more effectually per-

haps than another could have done, from my acquaintance with the military authorities. I shall probably be in Paris some weeks. Could I ask you or Mr. Allen to send a letter to the address I shall give, telling me if Miss Van Zandt recovers?"

George laid his card upon the table, as Miss Radcliff replied, earnestly, "I am exceedingly sorry that you are obliged to go away now, Mr. Morton, and for such a cause. I will certainly let you hear from time to time, and I trust you will soon return to find Marian as well as ever. Words seem utterly powerless to express our gratitude. When she recovers she shall know how much she owes to your promptness and courage."

To Morton this interview was exceedingly painful, and he brought it to an end as speedily as possible. A short time sufficed for his preparations, and he left Sorrento, feeling that all he loved on earth was lying in that darkened room, with life and reason still in danger.

The telegraph had not yet annihilated distance, and those whose memory can still recall the fearful suspense of long-delayed letters, and slow modes of travel, will realize what

it cost Morton to leave Marian at this time. We will not attempt to follow him in the first stage of his journey, but turn to see if his suspicions of Radcliff were correct.

When Marian had left Harry the evening before, giving him to understand that he should not see her again that night, he felt very restless and unhappy. His conscience told him that if he lost her it would be by his own folly; yet he repeated to himself that it was Morton who had come between them with his claim upon her memory for past kindnesses, and especially with his sentimental rhapsodies about nature and art; two spells that had the strongest influence on Marian.

Radcliff had always regretted this characteristic of hers, and wished that, mentally, she had been more like Helen Grey. He sometimes recalled those bright summer mornings spent at the little country parsonage, and was occasionally tempted to feel that Helen, if she had had Marian's great beauty and high social position, would have been better fitted to make him happy. He had experienced a sense of rest in Helen's society, that Marian, who was always requiring sympathy and

enthusiasm concerning things in which he took no interest, never gave.

But the more he realized that they were drifting apart, the more determined he was to keep his hold upon her.

He had often in his mad jealousy tried to provoke a quarrel with George, and had intended to add his challenge to the one Lyle had offered. While he could but admire and respect the moral courage George had shown, he was still more enraged by the knowledge that this act had raised the artist in Marian's esteem and that he had lowered himself in her eyes, and that there was now no way of setting aside this hated rival by honorable means.

Other modes of removing him, malignant and base, shaped themselves in his secret heart. The two lazzaroni whom he had first seen at Pompeii, and who had often since crossed his path, especially the old man, seemed capable of any deed. He believed that they were either beggars or brigands, as best suited their purpose. Might he not employ them to remove Morton for a time, and just keep him a prisoner in their mountain haunts until Mrs. Van

Zandt and Marian could be induced to leave Italy? and if any thing more serious happened it could not be traced to him. But Radcliff was not yet hardened in crime, and he shuddered at these fiendish suggestions. He longed to get away from himself, to drown these thoughts in the wine-cup, since he had not the moral strength to entirely banish temptation.

He had been invited, as Morton suspected, to the bachelor party given that night at the hotel in Naples. If Marian had remained with him, making herself agreeable, he would not have gone; but as matters stood he dreaded to spend long hours alone, and resolved to have his horse saddled and start at once. As he did not wish the inmates of the villa to know the real cause of his going to Naples, he told Mr. Allen that he wished to see a friend who had just arrived. He would spend the night at the hotel, and return on the following day.

A gay scene presented itself to Radcliff's view when he reached the hotel. The large salon engaged for the occasion was brilliantly lighted, and groups of young men were gathered around the different card tables. As the wine

was constantly replenished the stakes grew higher, and the laughter louder and more boisterous. Harry sat down to a table with Lord Lyle, a Mr. St. John and an Italian named Morelli. He resolved to be very guarded, and risk but small amounts, as he believed his opponents more skillful players than himself. But fortune favoring him at first, he became excited and drank deeply. When his success began to fail, he recklessly threw down one gold piece after another, only to see Morelli add them to his rapidly increasing pile.

Suddenly Radcliff became convinced that the Italian was cheating, and springing to his feet, he grasped the man's hand, and accused him of using false cards. Morelli uttered a fierce imprecation at this charge, and drew out his stiletto, but Radcliff, now furious as a mad-man, cleared the table at a bound, and grasped his opponent by the throat. A general rush was made to separate the two men, but this was not accomplished until Harry had received a severe stab, and had thrown his enemy with such force upon the marble floor that he was picked up senseless.

Great excitement followed, and the party was

summarily broken up. Radcliff's friends carried him unconscious to a room in the hotel, and Morelli was removed to his own home. Radcliff's injuries did not prove very serious, although he was confined to his bed. When his wound was dressed and he was sufficiently himself to realize his position he was overwhelmed with rage and mortification.

Although convinced that the Italian was cheating, he could bring no positive proof of this, and it was impossible to tell what might be the result of the affray as it respected himself. Although his friends thought they could prove that he had acted simply in self-defense, that the Italian had first drawn a dirk upon him, all the testimony would show that he had begun the quarrel, and if he had killed Signor Morelli he might have to stand trial for murder.

But Radcliff was chiefly troubled by the thought of the light in which Marian would regard his conduct. When she came to hear that he had received his wound in a drunken quarrel over a gambling-table, he knew she would break her engagement at once; and of course his rival would be there to take immedi-

ate advantage of the situation. In order to gain time and see what would be the result, he asked Lyle to send a message to the villa saying that important business would detain him a few days longer at Naples. It was hoped that by some compromise with the friends of Morrelli all knowledge of this disgraceful affair might be suppressed. But they viewed the matter in a different light ; and believing Morrelli would surely die, went to the city authorities and represented Radcliff's attack upon the Italian in such a light that a police force was sent to arrest him and hold him in prison till they should know the result of the blow he had inflicted. Radcliff's friends remonstrated, and tried in every way to prevent his removal, but it was of no avail. He was carried upon a stretcher guarded by policemen, and was placed on a bed of straw in a criminal's cell.

When Mr. Allen started for Naples to tell Radcliff of Marian's condition, he decided that it would be well to stop and inform Mr. Hurlbert, the American consul, of the brigands' attempt to capture Marian, and advise with him as to what steps they ought to take with regard to the prisoners.

Mr. Hurlbert looked very grave and embarrassed as he came in to receive the old gentleman. "My dear sir," he said, "this is painful news I hear about Mr. Radcliff."

"What do you mean, Mr. Hurlbert?" asked Uncle Aleck, appalled at the prospect of a new trouble.

"Don't you know of the disgraceful occurrence that took place at the hotel at Naples last night? I feared Radcliff would get into trouble if he continued in the society of those reckless young men; but I regret it mostly on Miss Van Zandt's account."

"I have heard nothing. Tell me quickly, I beseech you," cried Mr. Allen, sinking into a chair. Mr. Hurlbert then gave an account of the quarrel as it had been reported, and of Radcliff's present position, trying to palliate his conduct as far as he could. But Mr. Allen's indignation knew no bounds when he found how completely he had been deceived. Radcliff's conduct at the picnic had displeased him; but to go off again at night to such a company under a false pretext—no wonder he had finished up the debauch by fighting with a low Italian gambler.

The old gentleman paced the floor in great distress, as he recalled Marian's cries for her lover, and thought of the suffering that must come to Harry's aunt when she learned of his disgraceful conduct, and the heavy charges now resting upon him. Miss Radcliff was entirely bound up in this selfish young man, who scarcely ever gave her more than a passing thought, except as she could be useful to him. It is hardly surprising that Uncle Aleck should now bitterly resent Harry's present action and think more of the painful tidings he was obliged to carry back to his dear old friend than even of Marian's unfortunate position.

He told Mr. Hurlbert of Marian's escape from the brigands by Morton's aid, and the condition in which he had left her; and then breaking down completely, he moaned, "Oh, she had better die than recover to know how unworthy is the man she so tenderly loves."

"Are you sure she is so strongly attached to Radcliff? I have had my suspicions that her eyes have been gradually opened to his faults, and that it will not cost her such bitter sorrow as you imagine to break her engagement. As

for her frantic calls upon him now, I believe it is the dread of the brigands, and fear that he will not pay the ransom promptly, which haunt her frenzied brain. I do not believe his presence would bring any relief."

"Yes, yes, if she recovers the engagement must be broken. Mrs. Van Zandt and I, as her guardians, will insist upon it," said Uncle Aleck, following out his own thoughts.

"You are in no condition to go on to Naples. I will see the young man and tell him what seems best. I will also do my utmost to prevent this affair from proceeding any further. But I imagine if Morelli recovers Radcliff will have to leave this vicinity unless he wishes to lose his life. I know the fellow is a cheat and a desperado, and therefore to be feared. He will stop at nothing to secure his revenge, and if he does not live to execute it, his friends will."

"Shall I tell his aunt, Miss Radcliff?"

"Use your own judgment about that, but wait if you can until you hear from me. I will see you to-morrow. Meanwhile, keep up a brave heart, my dear sir, and be thankful this occurred before the marriage. I have

often found in my experience that the darkest hour is just before dawn."

Mr. Allen grasped his friend's hand and said, "I trust it will prove so in the present case, for certainly the outlook is black enough now."

CHAPTER XXVI.

A STAGE RIDE BY NIGHT.

GEORGE MORTON had arrived at Marseilles by ship from Naples, and was waiting to have his baggage examined at the custom house, expecting to take his seat at once in the large diligence that would soon start for Paris.

The driver was already upon his box, and six strong horses, with jingling bells, were stamping, impatient to be off. But their heads would droop, and their fiery spirits flag long before they had drawn the lumbering coach over the heavy roads, and through the clammy mist of that cold, dark night to the next post-house.

Pleasure-seekers, with abundance of leisure and a true love of nature, often look back regretfully to those days, as they are whirled at railroad speed over beautiful plains and val-

leys, and through dark mountain tunnels ; but not so the traveler impatient to reach his destination. However, there were then no swifter modes of conveyance, and Morton resigned himself to the long, comfortless journey as best he could.

While arranging his wraps he saw sitting opposite him a little boy and girl, whose heavy eye-lids and weary faces indicated that their usual bed time was already past. He was wondering if they were journeying alone, when a stout old Irish woman at the coach door called out, in strong Hibernian accents: " Patrick Luigi, git out o' that, ye lazy spalpeen, an' help yer ould granny wid her things to the stage."

The boy scrambled down, and following the old woman, attempted to carry one end of a large wooden chest across the court-yard to their conveyance. George's natural impulse was always to help the weak, so he started to offer himself as a substitute, when a custom-house officer stopped the woman, and laying his hand on the chest, told her it had not yet been examined.

Not comprehending, she replied, " Shure ! I

kin carry me own box ; I want none o' yer help."

He politely repeated his statement, but she, pushing him roughly aside, cried, " I've narry a centissima nor ha'penny to spend on porters, so yees kin jist git out o' me way."

The Frenchman now in angry, rapid words, ordered her to stop and put down the chest, but she held on, saying, " Divil a bit do I understan' o' yer gibberish ; but if ye'r expectin' a job from me this noight ye've got hould o' the wrong body."

Losing all patience the officer called two men, and ordered them to carry the chest to a raised platform some distance off, where he opened it and began overhauling the contents.

The woman, crying, " Shtop thafe ! shtop thafe ! " followed as fast as her weight of flesh would permit. By this time Morton overtook her, and tried to explain the necessity of the examination of baggage at that point. When she could recover her breath she exclaimed, " Faith ! is that it ? Indade, sir, I'm much beholden to yees. I thought they were jist a pack o' thaves stealin' all a lone woman's pos-

sessions. An' I'll not thrust 'em yet," she added, with kindling wrath. "What are they thryin' to do wid them bottles I wrapped in me ould black gown?"

"They don't allow those to pass unless you pay duty on them."

"Pay on 'em! Shure do they think I stole 'em? I paid all they axed, a hape mor'n I ought, afore iver I shtarted."

George again patiently explained the requirements of the law, and the woman finally pulled out an old blue stocking from the depths of her pocket, and shaking from it some Italian coins, laid down the sum demanded, and then had the satisfaction of seeing her precious bottles restored to their place, and her box fastened and removed to the coach.

When she took her seat opposite George her ample proportions so filled that side of the stage that the children were in danger of being extinguished, but pulling the little girl to her lap, she stowed Patrick Luigi away in a vacant space at her feet, where he soon fell asleep.

Depressed and weary, Morton longed for the quiet indulgence of his own reflections, and was dismayed at the thought of the garrulous

talk of this woman through the dreary night ride. He wished to change his position, but every other place was taken. The woman was scarcely seated before she began:

"Indade, sir, I'm jist deloighted to foind a raal jintlemon travelin' the same road, who loike meself, kin spake the king's English. I've heerd them Frenchers would chate ye out o' yer eyes if they got a chance; but I kin rest aisy now wid yees to pertect me."

George thought she would be a heavy responsibility in more senses than one.

"How happens it you are so far from home?"

"Becaze, sir, me daughter were married to an Italian, an' living in Naples. But her mon died, an' she kept writin' for me to come to her, sayin' how she was very sick, an' would I lave me grandchilder wid no one to moind 'em, till I jist had to go. I sailed all the way from England, an' it was a dale aisier nor this sort o' travelin', but theer was no ship comin' back jist now.

"Me daughter Maria was as smart and purty a girl as iver yer set eyes on whin she fhirst went to Italy. I'll tell yer honor how she come to

go. Ould Sir James Ross, him as were my master, sint his son a travelin' soon as ivir he come o' age, an' somewheers in those strange countrys he falls in love wid a furren leddy. He married her widout his family knowin', an' brought her back to Ross Castle, which is in County Kerry, Ireland,—wheer may the blessed Virgin presarve me to git back again. Well, as I was tellin' yees, the new wife, though she was as swate an' purty a leddy as iver lived, wasn't loiked at all at all by me ould master. An' faith, sir! he was no aisy to git on wid, an' blessed St. Bridget herself couldn't have plazed him. So after baby Marian was born, the docthers said her mother must go back to Italy if they wanted to kape the breath o' life in her."

George had listened to the old woman's story perforce, his thoughts meanwhile dwelling in the sick girl's room in the villa near Sorrento. But when her name was mentioned his attention was fully aroused.

"Did they return? Did they go to Naples?" he asked eagerly.

"Yis, they went there first, an' my Maria wid 'em as nurse for the baby. They lived two

years in that place, thin when their leetle b'y was born they hired a house not far away, but I don't jist moind the name."

"Was it Sorrento?"

"Bedad! that's it. They lived there five or six years; an' my Maria larned to spake the Italian as if it were her mother tongue, an' what was worse got in love wid an Italian sailor, bad luck to him."

"Did she marry this sailor?"

"Yis, but not tell after a terrible thing happened her. I'll tell yer honor all about it if yees loike to hear, fer now she's dead an' gone, poor cratur! it can't harm her. But it nearly kilt her intirely whin it happened. An' she jist wasted away from that toime wid cryin' an' doin' heavy penance for them lost childer."

George was now leaning forward hanging upon every word with intense eagerness. The woman, gratified to have such an interested listener, continued in her rambling fashion:

"The way she come to be left wid 'em, sir, was becaze me ould master was taken so sick the docthers said his toime had come for sure. So a messenger was sent to bring home his son as fasht as iver he could thravel. He brought

his wife wid him, but left both the childer in the care of Maria an' their stewart John Laury.

"As ould Sir James kept hangin' on, disappointin' the docthers, they wrote to John Laury to bring Maria an' the childer home in a ship from Naples to England. At Naples they had to wait a bit fer the ship to sail, and John went out to look afther their luggage bein' aboard; while Maria an' the leetle gairl and b'y staid an' looked out o' the windy. An' bad luck to it, who should my gairl see but her sailor swate-hairt jist come back from over the seas, an' what does she do but run down an' spake to him, first telling the childer never to shtir a shtep from the room.

"She said it wasn't half an hour she was gone, but faith, sir, gairls in love kapes no count o' toime, whin their swate-hairts is wid 'em. So I'm not sure it wasn't a bit longer. Howiver, whin she come back, the childer were gone. She ran screechin' through the house, axin' ivery body about 'em, an' some one said they'd seen 'em down by the door lookin' at a lot o' sodgers goin' by wid a band. Maria thin went an' tould Luigi Varona, her swate-hairt, what had happened, an' both were that scart she

niver dared go back to let John Laury know how she'd left 'em, for they thought she'd be put in prison an' kilt intirely.

"She and Luigi walked the strates, lookin' and lookin' fer the poor leetle cratur, till both were ready to drop. Then she let him carry her away in his boat till they shtopped at a place wheer there was a praste an' were married. But she niver was happy afterward wid grievin' fer them childer, an' bime by she coaxed her man to bring her back to Naples."

"What did Laury do when he returned and found all gone?" asked George.

"Faith! he did all he could. He went to the perleese, an' got a lot o' men lookin' fer 'em. But it was all no use. Nayther he nor their poor father an' mother laid eyes on 'em agin," said the old woman, pulling up one end of her shawl to wipe away the tears that were fast rolling down her cheeks.

"It was an awful day, sir, whin John coom back to Ross Castle widout 'em. I thought me young missis would die too, fer she jist swooned away, an' it were hours afore she come back fairly to life agin. But as soon as iver she did she was fer goin' right off to

look fer them herself. So they went, the ould master bein' gone by this, sarchin' an' sarchin', but niver findin', till the poor swate leddy died of a broken hairt."

"She is dead?"

"Yis, six years gone. Sir James brought her back to be buried in the family chapel, an' there's the beautifulest monument put up by him for her an' the childer, fer he belaves they'r dead too, ye moind; an' now he jist wanders round the worruld, the loneliest man I iver seed, but so restless he can't kape aisy any wheers."

"Then he is not now at Ross Castle?"

"Indade, I can't tell yez that for sure, I've been away meself mor'n a year. It were asore throuble to me whin I found Maria was lost too. I thought her dead whin I got me first letter, beggin' me to come to Naples. I would not belave she wasn't till I got another beggin' and beseechin' me to hurry, for she was sick an' alone wid these childer. Thin I jist took up ivery cint I had laid by, an' shtarted in a ship as I towld yez. Och, mavourneen! she's dead an' gone now, an' I'm takin' me gran'childer back to ould Ireland."

The woman here threw her shawl over her

head, rocked to and fro, sobbing with the impulsive, passionate grief of her nation.

Morton spoke a few kind words of sympathy and consolation; then gave his thoughts to a careful review of her whole story. It so fully coincided with what the child had told him that day long ago upon the prairie, in both the names and the principal incidents, that he could not doubt Sir James Ross was Marian's father. As he fully realized this, his heart was filled with joy and thanksgiving.

He had taken his seat for that cold, stormy ride, feeling that the dreary landscape over which rose those eddying wreaths of thick mist, but typified his own desolate existence enveloped in clouds of doubt that now rolled down dark and heavy upon him. For the first time the creed of his youth failed to meet the stronger needs of his manhood. All life then appeared to him like those turbulent vapors, whirled hither and hither in a complexity of infinite error; while everywhere some irremediable grief or wrong, said: "There is no God save the blind god of chance."

But was it accident merely, or a heaven-sent message, though clothed in such humble guise,

that had revealed to him the knowledge he had so long searched for in vain?

Morton pondered this problem, so strangely brought home to him, among the many thoughts which agitated him as he rode wakeful through the long night.

He decided not to tell the woman any thing about Marian, but to wait until he saw Colonel Haywood. If he should not be detained long in Paris, he would go at once to Ross Castle, in the hope of finding the father and preparing him for tidings of his lost daughter. Perhaps by the time Morton could leave Paris he might receive intelligence as to the probability of her recovery. It would seem like the refinement of cruelty to tell Sir James of his child, and have him arrive at Sorrento only to find her no longer living.

George was also anxious to judge of his character, whether Marian would gain or lose by coming under this unknown father's guardianship: if he was a man of the right sort, he might yet save Marian from the fatal mistake of marrying Radcliff. Then a faint gleam of hope shot up in Morton's heart, but he ruthlessly stamped it out, and resolved to work as

faithfully for her happiness as if she could give him the boon he so longed for.

He decided to write to Mr. Allen of the discovery he had made, and request him, when Marian was well enough, to prepare her for the welcome news.

CHAPTER XXVII.

ROBERTA'S STORY.

WHEN Mr. Hurlbert reached Naples, he found, after using his utmost influence as consul, that all he could secure for Radcliff was a few extra comforts and regular medical attendance.

Harry's enforced confinement was made infinitely more bitter and intolerable when he knew the danger Marian had been in, and her present condition ; especially as he learned that it had been caused by the very man he had been plotting in his mind to use against his rival, and that it was Morton who had rescued her.

He knew perfectly well that if Marian recovered all hope for him was over. He also knew that a felon's death probably awaited him ; and in the abyss of black despair that now opened at his feet, he saw all his former

easy, careless existence sink forever. Angry remorse at the folly of his past conduct, intense shame and degradation as he realized all the consequences of his act, made him lie upon his wretched pallet of straw, like Lucifer, while yet within sight of the heaven he had lost ; and only fierce, devilish instincts, now unrepressed, ran riot through his reckless soul.

The following day, when Mr. Allen called to see the prisoner, he found him morose and sullen, and was received with an assumption of haughty indifference. After inquiring for Marian, Radcliff said : "Of course I understand that if I am ever released from this place alive, Miss Van Zandt will want to break all connection with me."

"As her guardians, Mrs. Van Zandt and I must claim that for her, Mr. Radcliff. We could not trust her happiness to the care of one who as a lover neglects her for such society as you have lately sought.

"O, my dear friend!" said the old man, bowing his head in sobs. "I had hoped such noble things of you. With such fair prospects and every thing to enrich life ; now to see you here in a felon's cell ; it almost breaks my heart.

Are you ready to face the awful future that may so soon await you?"

"I believe in nothing, I hope soon to become nothing; the sooner the better. It is of no use to preach to me, Mr. Allen. You are wasting your time; and tell aunty that she must not come here till I know how this affair is to be settled. I presume she will insist upon seeing me before the final tragedy."

Uncle Aleck saw that his words were of no avail, and went sadly out; his only feeling of relief being a deep gratitude that Marian was not already bound by ties which could not be broken.

In a little more than a week, Morelli was pronounced out of danger, and Harry was released on payment of a fine; but Mr. Hurlbert assured him he must leave the country at once, for his enemy intended to be revenged, and would easily find the means to do it if Radcliff remained. So without even returning to the villa for a farewell glance at Marian or one word of parting with his aunt, whose heart had been devoted to him from infancy, he went secretly by a private conveyance to Rome, and thence to Paris, where he was soon surrounded

by the gayest of the gay. But often when his laughter rung the loudest, he would turn aside with a bitter sigh, and for a moment the mask would drop, and reveal the disgust within.

During those weeks Marian slowly struggled back to life and reason. The wild, hunted look left her eyes, her labored breathing became easier, the mutterings of delirium ceased; and finally came the blessed, quiet sleep so longed for. Now her anxious watchers stole around, scarcely daring to whisper, in fearful suspense as to what the waking might be. At last, too weak to realize any thing of the past, she opened her eyes and smiled in Miss Radcliff's face, who stood by her bedside and gave her some little nourishment. Then she fell into a sweet, natural slumber again, and the doctors said in lowest tones that the crisis was past.

When she wakened once more Roberta was kneeling by her bed alone. Slowly a remembrance of the past came to Marian, and looking up with startled eyes she said, feebly, in Italian, "Roberta! I remember all now—they were frightened, I was carried off. What happened? How came I here?"

"The Signor Americano saved you. O, dear signorina, I never wrote that note! I can't tell you more. When you are stronger you shall know all. You must just sleep now and get well."

Marian closed her eyes and a delicious sense of rest and peace stole into her heart as she recalled all the troubled thoughts before her terrible fright. She realized how unwise she had been in seeking that lonely hut without an escort at such an hour. But now she was safe, and it was sweet to owe that rescue to the friend who had been so true, so faithful, through all these years. She gained strength fast from that hour.

The next evening as Roberta was sitting by her she said, "You told me you never wrote that note. Who did?"

"It was my bad father who betrayed you to those brigands. He thought your friends would pay a large ransom and he would share it with them. He wanted to get rid of me, and so he began to complain that I did not give him every lira I earned, and said if I meant to spend every thing for Tommaso and myself he would no longer give us a home; and when

I said I had scarcely been able to earn enough to keep my little blind brother and myself from starving, he insisted that I was lazy, and in his rage beat me and drove us both out of doors.

"We did not know what to do, and were sitting crying by that old shrine, you remember, when Signor Morton came by. He asked me what was the matter? and I told him how my father had turned us out.

"Then I don't believe you have had any dinner,' he said, in his strong cheerful voice, and lifting Tommaso to his shoulder, he made me follow him to a place where he gave us such a dinner as we had hardly ever tasted before. After we could eat no more he said he knew a foreign lady, who wanted an Italian maid, and he was sure she would take any one he could recommend. When I said I couldn't leave my little brother, he asked if I wouldn't trust him to his care? He wanted just such a little boy for a model.

"Tommaso was eager to go with the signor, so he took me right to the foreign lady. She was very kind and said I should remain with her, and my little brother could come see me every day, for Tommaso can find his way about quite

easily when once shown. O, how grateful and happy we were!

"The day when you were out sailing, as Signor Morton was away too, Tommaso went back to our home to get his mandolin. He thought he had better climb up in the olive tree and listen if father was in the house before he went in. When he was close to the window he heard father talking to some men, telling them about you, how rich your friends were, and that if you could be brought to our house alone with the belief that you would hear of your father, you could easily be taken. He said he knew you had been stolen from your parents when you were a little child."

"How did he know that?" asked Marian, eagerly.

"I can't tell you, signorina. I never told him."

Marian remained thoughtful, as she recalled how this man had always impressed her as one she had seen before, but when or where she could not imagine. "Go on," she said, finally.

"Tommaso heard father say he had written you a note signed in my name, and had hired a girl to leave it at your house. In that note he

asked you to come out and meet an old woman who could tell you about your parents; and the men all laughed when father said, 'I'll play old woman for her.' They talked over what the ransom should be, and how many should come to take you, then all went away.

"Tommaso climbed down from the tree and came at once to tell me what he had heard, but I was away riding with my signora, and it was nearly sunset when I came home. After he told me, I was so frightened I could not think what to do, but Tommaso said, 'Let's go ask the signor.' I thought he was right, and we both ran as fast as we could to his studio. I repeated to him what Tommaso had said. He turned as white as this coverlet, and cried something in English, as he started to rush out of the room. But coming back, he said, 'I am going to the captain of the gendarmes, and will get him to come with as large a force as I can. Meanwhile, you go quickly to the hut, and do all in your power to save her from danger and insult until I can get there. I will bless you with my heart's deepest gratitude if you can help her in any way.' Then he was out of sight in a moment, and I, bidding Tommaso re-

main where he was, ran toward home with all my might, and came in just as you know. O, I am so glad I was not too late ! In a moment more you would either have fallen or jumped off into that deep ravine and been killed.

"You remember afterward when the gendarmes came up and made the attack, the captain caught you in his arms and tried to escape with you. But Signor Morton struck him down, lifted you up and carried you back to our hut, fearing that you were dead. It was a long time before you opened your eyes, and when you did, you saw only that awful ravine and those dreadful men.

"And so it has been all these weeks. You have cried day and night for your friends to save you ; and begged me never to leave you. I have been here ever since then praying the blessed Virgin to intercede with her Holy Child for your life."

"Dear Roberta, how can I ever thank you ?"

"Thank me ! O, it made me just wild with grief and rage to think all this dreadful trouble had been brought upon you in my name !"

Here there was a knock at the door and Mr. Allen entered. Dismissing Roberta, he sat

down by Marian's side, and gently stroking her thin, white hand, looked anxiously at her, thinking how he could reveal the knowledge of her lover's conduct. She helped him by saying, "Uncle Aleck, what has become of Mr. Radcliff?"

"He has gone to Rome. O, Marian, my child! I fear I have a great sorrow in store for you. Harry has proved himself wholly unworthy. Your mother and I must insist upon breaking your engagement unless he becomes a very different man. Darling, you had better die of a broken heart, than spend a lifetime of misery."

"Don't feel so grieved for me, Uncle Aleck. Before I was taken sick, after his conduct that day at the pic-nic, I felt I must insist upon a release. O, Uncle Aleck! I never loved him as I should, to have made such a promise; and it were far better broken than kept. Though if he had been what I at first believed him when I gave my pledge I would have tried to prove a faithful wife. But has any thing happened lately?"

With a feeling of infinite relief that Marian was so well prepared, he told her of Harry's quarrel and its results; adding that he had gone

away showing no desire to retrieve the past. It was a great shock to Marian, but in her weakness it was also a relief to know that she was saved the ordeal of personally breaking with him.

After some further conversation, she asked Mr. Allen to convey her thanks to Mr. Morton for his great kindness in rescuing her from the brigands.

"Didn't you know that he had left Sorrento?"

"No," she replied faintly, her heart throbbing with a more acute pain than had been called forth by all the tidings of Harry's conduct.

"The day after he rescued you he was summoned to Paris to see Colonel Haywood, who was there in some trouble, and wanted Morton's help. Morton called here before leaving, and gave his card of address to Miss Radcliff, but in the excitement and grief about her nephew she has lost it. I am daily hoping to hear from him, or see him back again."

"He expects to return then?"

"Oh yes. When he went he hoped to be gone only a short time. But I fear I have tres-

passed too long upon your strength. I can't tell you what a relief it is to know that your heart is not so wholly in Radcliff's keeping as I feared."

"Uncle Aleck, do you think he will throw himself utterly away? And am I responsible for it?"

"No, my dear, he has no one to blame but himself. Be thankful that you have been saved from the misery of such a union. Good night. Get well soon as you can, for I believe that a brighter future is in store for you."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

COLONEL HAYWOOD.

WHEN Morton reached Paris he secured lodgings for Mrs. O'Flanagan and her grandchildren until he could see Colonel Haywood and ascertain his condition.

He found his old friend occupying a richly furnished, but cold and dreary apartment, in a large hotel. He was sitting with his hands resting listlessly upon a table, and with such a look of pain and despondency upon his face, which had aged greatly since Morton had last seen him, that he could hardly command a cheerful greeting.

The colonel gave a sudden start, followed by a gleam of pleasure, as he grasped George's hand, saying over and over, "How good, how kind of you to come!"

"My dear sir, could you doubt my coming

when I received your letter? You wrote of loss—of deep trouble. Where is—”

“My wife has deserted me—gone off with some cursed fool who calls himself a marquis.”

“Colonel Haywood! how could she be such a wretch!”

“She might at least have waited till I was dead,” said the old man with intense bitterness, and then relapsed into the same listless stupor which George had noticed when he first saw him. George took his hand and pressed it with strong sympathy, while his heart ached to see his old friend so crushed and broken.

Rousing himself with an effort, the colonel said, “O, George! if you had only consented to follow out my wishes I don’t think you would have regretted it, and I should never have met this grief and shame.”

“My dear sir, I believed then that I was doing right, though the result would seem to show that I was not. But ‘there’s a divinity that shapes our ends, rough-hew them how we will.’ Perhaps we shall be able to see that when we get through this tangled labyrinth of life.”

“I’ve been sorely tempted to end my life by

my own hands, only it seemed too cowardly an act for a soldier. Yet you can fancy what it has been to sit here alone day after day, cursing my folly in loving such a woman, and thinking of the shame she has brought me, till it seemed as if my reason would go." He made a long pause, then continued, "About a month since, I received a letter from my business agent, stating that several buildings upon Broadway, in which the most of my property was invested, had been burned to the ground. I told my wife that I should be obliged to return home, and that I could not now give her the elegant establishment she wished, as my income would not warrant such expenditure. She seemed to acquiesce with more fortitude than I expected, and I thought I had misjudged her, and that this trouble and loss might draw us more closely together.

"We had nearly finished our preparations for leaving Paris, when coming back to these rooms after being out all the morning to attend to some final arrangements, I found her gone, and a letter telling in most heartless terms with whom she had eloped. It was such a terrible shock! I seemed to lose all power of thought

or action. I wrote to you as soon as I could, and hoped you would arrive before my reason entirely deserted me."

"My dear friend ! you must not talk in this despondent way. I expect to see you spend many hale, useful years yet," said George, in his earnest, cheerful voice. "You must leave Paris, and try to forget this woman, who was so unworthy of your generous love."

"I wish that I could get back and see the old fort once more ; but I don't seem to have the power to rouse myself."

"You shall see it. We will go back together."

"O George ! would you go with me ?" asked the old man eagerly, but continued with a heavy sigh, "It is too great a sacrifice to bind you to such a helpless burden as I have become."

"My time is now wholly at your service," was George's hearty assurance. And he was soon convinced that it would be impossible to leave Colonel Haywood ; also that it would be advisable to take the first vessel sailing for America.

Having reached this conclusion, he sent the Irish woman and her grandchildren by a safe escort to Calais, and with her a letter to Sir James Ross, giving Marian's story, and telling

of her present residence in the home of her childhood, and of her condition when he had left Sorrento.

He thought it would be better now to let the old woman know about Marian, and his belief that Sir James was her father. This would lead Mrs. O'Flanagan to guard the letter more carefully, and she could add her testimony to what he had written of his discovery through her.

When she had heard the story of the lost child she exclaimed, "Faith! sir, if ye'd towld me I'd be made a duchess ye couldn't have made me half so glad; fer, barrin' the rint-rolls, I'd rather be myself whin I think o' takin' such good news back to me master. It's jist the best luck as iver happened me. An' to think o' lettin' unbeknownst about them childer to the very man in all the wide worruld as knew of that little gurrel. Indade, indade, I'll see that the master gits yer letter. An' sure, we'll soon have another swate leddy at the ould castle. May be ye'll come then yerself some day," she added, with a keen, significant glance.

George said he certainly would as soon as he could leave his friend. But if Sir James Ross

was not at home she must send the letter to him by a trusty messenger, as no time was to be lost.

She promised faithfully to obey his instructions, and in parting called upon the Virgin and all the saints to bless him, "for being a raal jintleman, if he hadn't e'er a foine handle to his name."

Each day before leaving Paris George hoped the post would bring him a letter from Sorrento. But as Miss Radcliff had lost his address none came, so he was obliged to sail for America, not knowing whether Marian was still alive, and ignorant of the fate of his letter to her father. But he felt that the time had now come when he could repay to Colonel Haywood the kindness he had received when a poor and friendless youth.

During the long voyage home, Morton strove in every way to turn the colonel's thoughts from his recent painful experience back to the halcyon days of his early military career. He drew him into talk about his old campaigns until the colonel seemed to himself to be fighting them again. Thus by the time they reached New York Haywood's mind had recovered

much of its old vigor and cheerfulness. But there were scars of heart suffering which he would carry to his grave, and he had become so dependent upon George for society, and so infirm in many respects, that a sense of duty held the strong young man month after month by his old friend's side.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE SEARCH IS ENDED.

MARIAN gained strength very rapidly and soon spent most of her time upon the piazza, enjoying the fresh ocean breezes which came mingled with the fragrance of spring flowers. While she was sitting there about sunset, indulging in a happy reverie, a carriage drove up, and Mr. and Mrs. Schuyler alighted, accompanied by Helen Grey. With a glad cry Marian ran to meet these dear home friends, then drew them into the parlor to receive the warm welcome of her mother and Miss Radcliff. There by the lamp-light she observed Helen's dress of deep black, and throwing her arms around her, said with a look and tone of strong sympathy, "I understand now how you can be here."

"Yes, father died last fall. O Marian! his end was so beautiful, so peaceful, that I can not

grieve, desolate as I was left after he had gone."

"Tell me all about it, dear," said Marian, drawing her again out upon the piazza.

"It was the fifteenth of October. Father felt unusually well that morning and spent some hours in his study, but after dinner he went to his room to lie down, saying he was tired. At sunset he had not come out, and I softly opened the door to see if he were awake. He was reclining with closed eyes, a sweet smile on his lips, and his hands folded peacefully in an attitude of perfect rest, but a rest that earth's turmoils would never more disturb."

"It was a fitting end," whispered Marian, drawing her friend close in her embrace. Both were silent for some time and then Helen said, "Mrs. Schuyler made me promise to come to her when father died. I went soon after the funeral, intending to ask her influence in gaining some kind of employment; but she said she was getting old and very lonely, and wanted me to remain with her as a companion. She put it in the light of a business arrangement so that I could feel independent. But no daughter ever received more love and tender

sympathy than both Mr. and Mrs. Schuyler have shown me from the first. You can imagine what a pleasure it was to come here with them and see you in your old home. But I so hoped that you had found your parents."

"I have no trace of them yet, though I feel sure that I shall find them some day."

She then gave a sketch of her life since coming to Europe. The girls were still deeply absorbed in their confidential talk when Marian was summoned to receive Mr. Hurlbert.

After an introduction to the guests just arrived, he said to her: "Miss Van Zandt, I have an important communication for you from Roberta's father, who to-day has made a full confession to his priest and myself of his wicked life."

"Do you wish to see me alone?"

"There is no reason why your friends should not hear it. He was a native of Ischia, he said. His father brought him up to the wild, desperate life of a smuggler on the high seas. Thus he came to visit many lands and learn to speak many languages. At one time in Ischia he did a deed that made it necessary to escape for his life. He found a ship about to sail from

Naples for America, and resolved to go there. While waiting for the ship to sail, as he was walking aimlessly through the streets he met two lost children. He immediately conceived the idea of taking them with him and selling them as slaves. Their complexions were so dark, especially that of the boy, he thought there would be no difficulty. He had been told he could get fancy prices for such children."

Marian exclaimed, "Now I know why I thought I had seen him before. But how could he recognize me now?"

"I will tell you. He said the boy died, and he thought the girl would die too; so he sold her to an American squatter who was moving West and gave her no further thought. Years after, he came back to Naples with a wife and two children, and took up his abode in the hut where you were captured by the brigands. After his wife died, he united the pursuits of beggar and highwayman; but he was careful to keep the latter occupation a secret from his children.

"As one of the *lazzaroni* he hung around us that day at Pompeii; and was sunning himself against an old wall when my wife, sitting close

by, told the story of your loss, ignorant of other listeners. He recognized his part in the matter, and felt sure of your identity. He then formed the dastardly scheme of again kidnapping you from your friends."

"Did he know whose children he had stolen?" asked Marian eagerly.

"No, I questioned him closely on that point."

"Oh!" said Marian, in a tone of deep despondency. "I did hope that I was going to hear something definite at last."

"Wait, I have more to tell you. Mr. Morton on his journey to Paris, following out his usual practice of helping all who are in trouble, came in contact with an old Irishwoman who was his fellow-passenger on the diligence. She told him she had been at Naples, where her daughter Maria had lived in service for some years with a Sir James Ross. This nobleman had two children, one a little girl called Marian. They hired this villa for several years. Then his father, who at that time held the title, was taken very ill, and he and his wife went in haste to Ross Castle in Ireland, leaving these children in charge of his steward and her

daughter Maria. She, as you know, left them alone at the hotel in Naples, and they strayed from the door and were lost. Mr. Morton recognized the old woman's story as agreeing with your recollections of your childhood, and felt sure that Sir James Ross was your father. He sent him a letter by her, as he could not leave his friend."

"My father is now in Ireland!" cried Marian. "O, Mr. Hurlbert! do you know where? Can you tell me how I can find him?"

"Try to calm yourself, Miss Van Zandt, or I shall not dare tell you that he is much nearer."

"Where? where? Oh! let me go to him," she cried, springing to her feet; but at this instant a tall, gray-haired man opened the door, saying, "I can wait no longer," and as Marian turned to see who had entered he moved quickly toward her exclaiming, "She is indeed my lost child; the very image of Carlotta."

In another moment father and daughter were locked in each other's arms, Marian sobbing for joy as she clung to him, while he pushed back her dark hair and covered her sweet face with kisses.

After their emotion had somewhat subsided Marian led him up to the couch upon which her adopted mother was reclining, and said, "Here, father, is the sweet, loving mamma, who took the poor little bond-child into her heart and home."

Tears that were no disgrace to his manhood dropped upon Mrs. Van Zandt's frail hands as he clasped them and raised them reverently to his lips, saying in a voice broken by deep feeling, "I have no words, madam, adequate to thank you, to express the gratitude in my heart for the tender care you have given my daughter all these years."

"Indeed, Sir James, Marian's devotion to me has far outweighed any sense of obligation. It does not seem as if I could have loved an own daughter more ; and since I have become a confirmed invalid no child could have lavished more loving, thoughtful care upon a mother than Marian day and night has given me," said Mrs. Van Zandt, looking with such deep affection upon the young girl, who was still kneeling by her side, that Sir James could not fail to see how close had become the tie between them.

"You will still be the only mother she can ever know, madam."

"O father!" cried Marian. "I was hoping to see my own mamma next."

"No, my child, she died six years ago, more in grief for her lost children than from any other cause; but it will almost seem as if I had her back again in you."

Now followed an introduction to Marian's other friends, and their hearty congratulations.

"I was pretty sure it would be necessary for me to come in order to complete this search for your father, Miss Marian," said Mr. Schuyler, who had been making vigorous use of his handkerchief, and now felt that he must cause a diversion of some sort to let down their excited feelings to a quieter mood.

"Here is Uncle Aleck," he continued, "who was sure he would make the first discovery, but I suppose he became so intent in chasing some rare Italian bug, that he forgot to look for any thing else."

"Indeed, I did make the first discovery. I pointed out to Marian a picture so remarkably well painted that she at once decided it was her old home; didn't I, dear?" said the old gentle-

man, bringing forward the picture which Marian had purchased, and relating to the company how they had found it ; and then he added, "I think Mr. Morton deserves all the gratitude in this case, and I am disappointed that he has not returned in time to enjoy this happiness with us."

Marian's own heart echoed this sentiment, and it was no grief to add this new proof of George's thought for her, to the many benefits he had already conferred. But now Sir James, seated among them, with his daughter by his side, began telling in a simple, graphic way the story of his life since he had lost his children. He described the weary search he and his wife had made all over Europe until his wife had died in disappointment and grief, and he had become the bowed gray-haired man they saw before them.

Marian also told of her life upon the prairie, and showed him the picture of her mother which she had worn ever since it had been so wonderfully restored to her. This would be doubly precious, since she knew it was all that was left to remind her of the parent she could so dimly remember.

Marian's quest was now ended. Sir James decided to remain with his daughter, as Mrs. Van Zandt could not leave that climate, and it was very evident her life would not be prolonged many months. She was not a great sufferer at any time, and could enjoy the society of her friends who daily gathered round her, and hardly noticed how the earthly fetters were gradually loosening their hold.

CHAPTER XXX.

CAST ADRIFT.

RADCLIFF had spent some months in Paris, trying by every course of reckless self-indulgence to quiet the unrest of his soul. The future possessed for him no object worth attaining, and he could recall the past only with shame. And so each day brought afresh the problem, how to drag through the long hours ; for always in the midst of his revelry he realized too well what it cost him to laugh ; and his ear seemed ever listening for well remembered footsteps, and hearing, when the music was sweetest, strains sung by the lips he had loved.

He was standing one morning in one of the gorgeous salons of the Louvre, listlessly watching an old man copying in miniature the festive scenes frescoed upon the walls and ceilings, with the heavy, ornate gildings between, and reproducing the mosaic tables, and

inlaid cabinets that decorated that long apartment. For years and years, this man, with his form dwindling and his hair growing gray, had been painting the same scenes. Harry appeared to see in him a symbol of himself, repeating over and over again his aimless round of revelry. With a feeling of intense loathing and weariness he looked up to see, near the end of the room, a well remembered face, whose deep, mournful gaze was fixed reproachfully on his own.

As he looked, instead of the glittering salon, with its groups of foreign visitors, he saw a simple country parsonage, in whose shaded parlor a soft breeze wafted the white curtains to and fro, as through the long summer mornings he sat reading or conversing, while close at hand, looking up to him with kindling eyes and flushing cheek, was that same face—then so bright—that now seemed but a vision of the past, showing for a moment the life that might have been.

Starting forward he sought to reach the phantom, but it had disappeared, leaving once more an insatiate yearning, a tumult of regret unrelieved.

For days he rode up and down the boulevards, and wandered around all public places of resort, hoping once more to see that face, but it never again appeared.

A letter was handed him one morning from a business friend of his father's, requesting his presence at once at Bordeaux, where an important communication was to be made to him.

With a dull curiosity as to what could be the cause of this hasty summons, Radcliff closed up his affairs in Paris and made the journey. When he reached Bordeaux he went at once to the residence of Mr. Osgood, his father's friend. This gentleman met him with a sorrowful face, and said, "My dear fellow, I have very bad news for you."

"Has any thing happened to my father? Is he sick?" asked Radcliff, roused at last to a feeling of alarm for the too indulgent parent, of whose generous love he had taken so little thought.

"It is more than sickness, Harry."

"Surely not death? Let me know the worst at once, I beseech you."

"Your father has been led into speculations,

and has lost not only all his own wealth, but trust funds committed to his care. He was arrested and imprisoned till some friends offered bail. He is now awaiting his trial."

With a deep groan Harry sank into a chair, and buried his face on the table before him. Could it be possible that the father whom he had always honored as the soul of integrity should have pursued such a course?

"Harry, I am so sorry for you!" said Mr. Osgood, with deep feeling. "This will make a terrible change in your gay, easy life. But remember how your father has toiled for you all the past years. It was to make your fortune still larger that he went into this first speculation. When that failed, in desperation he sank more and more money, hoping to retrieve all. Don't be too bitter, too hard upon him. He is an old man now, and may die of shame, of a broken heart, unless you can go to him and stand manfully by his side."

Radcliff tottered to his feet like one who had received a fearful blow. Lifting a haggard face to Mr. Osgood, he said, bitterly, "I have no right to reproach my father. Can you tell me when the first ship sails for New York?"

"In about six hours. I think you can secure a passage. I asked the captain to reserve a state-room for you, believing you would want to take the earliest opportunity to return. Will you let me give you a word of advice before we part? I have heard that you have been sowing wild oats in Paris lately. But let by-gones be by-gones, and make a new start. You have ability and education. Necessity is a stern teacher, but be strong and face the position manfully, and you may find this loss to be no real misfortune."

Harry broke into a fierce laugh as he said, "Yes, sir ; I've been a brute and a fool. I've squandered the wealth my father toiled for, like a true Prodigal Son, and now I must go feed on the husks with the swine. I know what a felon's cell is like. I may be able to keep my father company there. If I am to take that ship it is time I was off. Many thanks for your kind advice and sympathy. Good-by."

Then catching up his hat he passed out, while his old friend sadly shook his head, and said to himself, "I fear self-indulgence has gone too far—that he will just sink helplessly down to perdition."

Like one walking in a confused, unnatural dream, Harry made his arrangements for sailing. When he came on board, to his infinite chagrin he found that Mr. and Mrs. Schuyler and Helen Grey were among his fellow-passengers.

Unexpected business had summoned Mr. Schuyler home sooner than he had proposed to return, and his wife would not allow him to go alone. Radcliff now understood how that vision of the Louvre had come to him. Then it had held out a hope that, possibly, if he again sought the society of that noble, true-hearted woman, she might be willing to forget his past folly, and lead him on to a new and better future. But now, as he met her, and felt all the disgrace of his present position, her presence seemed but an added sting to the shame and remorse that overwhelmed him. He had thought in Paris that his life was as wretched as it could be, but he now realized that there were depths of suffering which his plummet had not then sounded.

He avoided his old friends as far as possible. In a few words he told Mr. Schuyler what was the cause of his sudden return, and, refusing all

sympathy, for several days moodily paced the deck or kept his own state-room.

They had been out a little over a week, when about midnight there was a sudden cry of alarm. Harry sprang up, and, dressing himself hastily, was in a few moments upon deck. The captain and officers were already there, giving rapid orders to the frightened crew, who were pouring water into the fore-castle, from which issued a dense mass of smoke.

It was a clear, starlight night, and the ship, having every sail set, was gliding with snowy canvas, swift as a bird, over the long smooth billows.

But there is no sound more awful than the cry of fire at sea. The captain ordered all the crew to the pumps. Pails of water were passed along by the passengers, and their contents were constantly dashed down the scuttle, but the smoke only grew denser, and tongues of flame soon began to shoot up.

No one could tell how the fire had originated; but when it was found that it could not be extinguished, and that the ship was doomed, the captain ordered the boats to be lowered, and a supply of water and provisions to be

stowed in them. This was quickly done. The passengers were all on deck, in breathless terror, watching the flames, which were now shooting up and catching the sails and rigging.

"Lower the women and children first," cried the captain. Mrs. Schuyler was handed down into the long boat, already so nearly filled that it could take but one more. Helen was standing at Mr. Schuyler's side upon the deck. "You go next," said the captain, turning to her, but she shook her head saying firmly, "Mr. Schuyler, accompany your wife. It makes little difference what becomes of me."

"Quick, quick," shouted the captain. "There's no time to be lost." Helen drew back and Mr. Schuyler was forced to take her place. Radcliff saw her standing alone, very pale but perfectly calm, as she watched the tongues of fire leaping from one spar to another. Springing to her side he caught her hand, and pushed their way through the crowd of men as another boat was brought up to the ladder. The sailors were about to fill it, but the captain ordered them back until Radcliff, catching Helen in his arms, placed her in the stern, and after tossing down a large bundle of wraps, took a seat

beside her; then the rest followed and the boat was pushed off.

The next few moments were full of awful excitement and peril. Almost before they were free from the burning ship she was enveloped in flames from stem to stern. The amount of spirits on board, for part of her cargo consisted of casks of brandy, made such a brilliant glare that the waters were crimsoned, and the whole heavens illuminated by its light.

The small boats pushed off as fast as possible from their dangerous proximity to the ship, whose sails were then one sheet of fire, crackling like paper in the intense heat. Slowly floating on the long waves the passengers and sailors watched their fast consuming vessel until the water extinguished the fire, and only a portion of the black hulk remained.

Fortunately the night was calm. The boats kept near together until morning. But the outlook was very serious. At dawn no sail was visible within the wide horizon. In those days the ocean had not become such a frequented highway of commerce as it is now, and it might be days, even weeks, before the boats would be picked up by a passing vessel.

Meanwhile there was little chance that they would live in a heavy sea should storms arise.

During the day the boats kept close together. Harry guarded Helen with increasing care, wrapping her thoroughly to protect her as far as possible from the chill ocean air. He also supplied Mrs. Schuyler with the other wraps he had secured, and assured her that if they were separated he would do all in his power for Miss Grey's safety and comfort.

Toward night the wind arose, producing a choppy sea. As darkness fell the boats were parted. Soon the surging of the water against the sides of the frail craft was terrible to hear, and it seemed as if at any moment she might founder.

"Miss Grey, how brave, how calm you are!" said Radcliff, as frequent shrieks of terror rose from those in the other boat. "Are you not afraid?"

"No. If the end is coming I shall only go Home to meet the loved ones already there. You know I have none left of my own upon earth. But you do not seem to fear either, Mr. Radcliff?"

"I shall not be sorry if I am soon relieved of this wretched life."

"How can a man scarcely thirty say that? Have you no dread of something after death?"

"You must remember, Miss Grey, that I have no belief in a hereafter. What do we know of any thing beyond this life? And what does our existence amount to here? One man makes wealth his aim, and for that sacrifices honor and honesty; another fame, and to win the popular applause he stoops to any evil. I had wealth. Fame was a more brittle bubble than pleasure, and so I sought the latter. That too broke in my grasp. I am now a beggared and disgraced man. What is left me? I have no wish but to 'shuffle off this mortal coil' as soon as possible. There is the reason, Miss Grey, why I can so indifferently view the almost certain destiny awaiting us."

"We make our own destiny by our own deeds. In a world full of suffering, of men lacking bread, of wrongs to be redressed, what right has any one to say there is nothing left save self-gratification? If this frail bubble you have hitherto pursued has broken, that is only what you might have expected. But pain and sor-

row are often blessings. They may become means of redemption. If your life should be spared and you should put forth the powers which I believe are now slumbering within you, you may rise to the dignity of true manhood. See! the dark night is almost over. There is a promise of a new and fair dawn in the eastern sky. O, let a new purpose come into your life! Let me plead for the duties yet undone, and for the future you may yet achieve."

"Miss Grey," he said bitterly, "you don't know how far I have fallen. Are you willing to listen to me?"

"Yes," she replied. And then urged by an irresistible impulse, he told her all his past, and ended by saying, "You see where I stand. I have merited my punishment; but is it possible to retrieve such a life?"

"Yes! If you will seek help from the One who is Mighty. And believe me, I have not lost faith in you!"

Here the roughness of the water made conversation impossible. Clouds still hung heavy over much of the sky, and the captain watched the shifting wind with intense anxiety; for the sea was running so high that it was difficult to

keep their small boats from being swallowed up in the trough of the waves.

But the intense excitement of the past hours had so fatigued Helen, that she dropped asleep even in the cramped position she was obliged to maintain.

Radcliff soon discovered that she was entirely unconscious of her surroundings, and passed his arm around her, giving support, and thus making her position one of comparative rest and safety. After a time the sun rose full and clear, dispersing the clouds; but Helen slept on as peacefully as an infant, her head pillowed upon Harry's shoulder. As he looked upon the pure, pale face, not indeed so classically beautiful as Marian's, Harry said to himself, "I was unworthy of Marian, and so I lost her. But Helen is as good and true. Possibly, if I strive to become a true man I may yet win her love. Surely she must feel my passionate heart beats, yet she is as unconscious as if I were miles away. I hope she will not resent the liberty I have taken for the sake of her comfort!"

But after a time, as his eyes still rested on her face, while indulging in a happy vision of

the possible future which he now meant to seek, she suddenly opened her eyes, and for a moment met his intent gaze in utter bewilderment; then the color rushed to her face as she realized her position, and sought hastily to withdraw herself.

"Forgive the liberty I took in your unconsciousness, Miss Grey," said Harry, with eager apology. "But I could not risk letting you fall over-board, and so I had to hold you fast."

"You were very kind," replied Helen, gratefully, yet shyly avoiding his appealing glance. "I have had a good rest, and am rejoiced to see that all indications of storm have passed away."

"Yes," said Harry. "There is still a chance for our lives."

Just then a white speck appeared on the edge of the horizon. The two boats had drawn together again, and all eyes were now strained toward the distant object. Could it be a sail? In awful suspense the issue was awaited.

"It's a ship! It's a ship!" shouted the captain and crew, as at last the masts showed dimly against the blue sky.

"Oh, will they see us!" cried both men and

women, as they stood up in their low boats and waved their signals of distress. In alternate fear and hope they waited. For a time the ship steadily pursued her onward way, and their hearts sank in despair. But in tacking she drew nearer. Sail after sail and then the dark hull came into view, approaching closer and closer. When she was again apparently about to change her course, the occupants of the boats renewed their signals and shouted with all their strength.

A faint, answering call came back over the water, and they knew that they were discovered.

But now a new fear assailed them. Who could tell whither the ship was bound? There were many carrying the pirates' black flag upon the high seas in those days.

But as she veered and came round on the wind to pick them up, a great cry of joy rang from the boats, for the name "Queen Charlotte" was in gilt letters upon her stern, and it was known that she was bound to the port which they were all longing to reach.

The vessel's deck was crowded with passengers and crew as the small boats came up along side; and many hands were stretched out to

help these claimants upon their pity. Captain Tinkham, a bronzed, jovial son of Neptune, gave them a most hearty welcome, and assigned them as comfortable quarters as such an increase in the number of passengers would permit.

When he ascertained the cause of their disaster, he assured them they were most fortunate to have been picked up so soon, as vessels seldom took that route.

During the remainder of the voyage Helen and Radcliff spent much of their time together. As he came to know more and more of her pure, earnest life, by degrees a spiritual light revealed all his self-blindness. He sought Helen's Saviour, and with solemn thanksgiving for his deliverance, he prepared to enter upon the conflict awaiting him in his native land.

CHAPTER XXXI.

TIDINGS AT LAST.

GEORGE MORTON, on a beautiful evening in early October, was slowly pacing one of the broad walks of the Battery. He had been spending the summer at West Point with Colonel Haywood, and now they were occupying apartments looking out upon the green trees and smooth grass plots in front of the fortifications. Here, instead of a landing-place for old-world emigrants, was at this period, a fashionable promenade, while the residences fronting it were regarded as being in the court end of New York.

Since Morton's return to America, he had received no tidings from Sorrento. He had written to Mr. Allen, requesting him to send his reply to the New York Post Office, but day after day he had gone away disappointed. Mr. Allen, thinking the letter would be more sure to reach its destination, had given it to Mr.

Schuyler when he was suddenly called home. It was consumed in the burning ship, and in the excitement of the time and the delay in reaching port, Mr. Schuyler forgot that he had ever received it.

That evening Morton had just returned from another unsuccessful call for his letter, and was feeling unusually depressed. As his eyes longingly followed a white winged vessel speeding down the bay, his fancy recalled that beautiful sail with Marian upon the azure bay of Naples, when they had visited the Caves of the Sirens; and he saw again every expression upon the young girl's changing face. Then the scene of the challenge passed before him, and Marian's rescue from the brigands, and the danger in which he had been obliged to leave her. It was dreary work waiting in such uncertainty.

But Morton's suspense was nearer termination than he imagined. As he turned away from the water to resume his walk, he was arrested by a voice saying, in pleased surprise, "Why, Mr. Morton, I did not know that you had returned to America."

Looking up he saw Miss Ethel Delaney and her mother standing before him, both richly

attired in the latest French styles. He greeted them very cordially and said, "This is indeed an unexpected pleasure. How long have you been back?"

"We landed a week ago, and have not yet gone to our country home. Miss Radcliff and Mr. Allen were our fellow-passengers. Haven't you seen them?"

"No. Is it possible they have returned without Mrs. Van Zandt and her daughter?"

"Oh, I suppose you have not heard then of Mrs. Van Zandt's death! You are aware, though, that the doctors said she could not live very long. However, you must know that Marian has found her father, for I understood that Sir James Ross first learned through you that his daughter was still living," continued Miss Delaney, surprised and delighted at the expression of intense interest with which George hung upon her words.

"I was obliged to leave Sorrento while Miss Van Zandt was still dangerously ill, and Colonel Haywood's condition when I arrived in Paris made it necessary to bring him immediately home. I have not heard any news from Sorrento. Here is a comfortable seat. Won't

you and Mrs. Delaney occupy it a little while this lovely evening, and give me a full account of all that has taken place?"

"With pleasure," said Miss Ethel, not consulting her mother, who, however, was accustomed to follow her daughter's whims.

"When did you leave Sorrento?" asked Morton.

"Just before Sir James Ross came. Mrs. Van Zandt lived hardly a month afterward. Then Marian went to her father's home at Ross Castle in Ireland. Miss Radcliff and Mr. Allen accompanied them, and came back on the same ship with us. From them we learned what I have just told you."

"Mr. Radcliff, I presume, remained with Miss Van—Miss Ross, I mean."

"Why, is it possible you do not know that her engagement is broken? Really what a budget of news I have for you! Mr. Radcliff had a fight with a low Italian gambler at the hotel in Naples, and the fellow's friends had Radcliff imprisoned until their comrade was out of danger. The whole thing was very disgraceful, and Mrs. Van Zandt insisted on breaking the engagement. It seems that Marian was not

at all opposed to this step either, when she recovered, though she kept calling him so frantically while she was sick."

Morton's heart bounded with joy at these words. He was unspeakably thankful that she was saved from the union he so dreaded.

But Miss Delaney continued, "Marian made a most fortunate escape, for I have heard since I came home, that Radcliff has met with a still greater disgrace, and lost all his wealth."

"How was that possible? I thought his father was very rich."

"Yes, but he had been speculating, and, not content with losing his own money, had used trust funds he held. He was imprisoned until bailed out by friends. His credit has always stood so high that the disgrace broke the proud old man down completely, and he lived only a few days after his son reached home. I hear that Harry has given up every penny of his personal property, inherited from his mother, to restore the trust funds. Miss Radcliff's money, fortunately, was not in her brother's possession. She wanted Harry to share all she had, but he refused. I am told he has accepted the management of a large tract of land which

Mr. Schuyler owns in Western New York, and is to become a regular backwoodsman. Just imagine the elegant, ease-loving Harry Radcliff, digging up stumps and following the plow. But I suppose he feels himself so disgraced in every way that he wants to bury himself alive."

"What you tell me shows in him a manliness of which I hardly believed him capable. He may make a noble character, if he does not allow misfortune to embitter him."

"Well, Marian made a happy escape. Miss Radcliff says her father's castle and estates are very fine. I suppose now she will marry some grand nobleman, and forget she ever was a Yankee girl." Here Ethel gave an unconscious sigh, as she recalled how completely her own ambitious hopes had been blasted. While Lord Lyle was making investigations into Mr. Delaney's financial status, that gentleman had also instituted some inquiries in England regarding the young nobleman's rank and estate; and he learned, that in consequence of a reckless course of dissipation, the title was about all Lord Lyle had left. Mr. Delaney had suspected the young man's intentions to

retrieve his losses by marriage with one of his daughters, and he immediately insisted upon leaving Naples, and as soon as possible brought his family back to America. Thus poor Ethel's castle never had any solid foundation, and it was with bitter envy that she thought of Marian, who she felt had always been her successful rival.

Mrs. Delaney complained that the air from the water was chilly, and so her daughter was obliged to take leave of the artist.

When the ladies were gone, Morton paced the walks some time longer, thinking over what he had just heard and reviewing all his intercourse with Marian. He was not sure of her feeling toward him, although he had always been conscious that a strong sympathy existed between them, and that they seemed intuitively to divine each other's thoughts. But even if he could win her, it was unlikely that Sir James Ross would ever so far forget his high rank as to bestow his daughter upon an artist who was comparatively poor, even though not unknown to fame both at home and abroad. However what was the use of trying to surmise the reception he might pos-

sibly receive? He was compelled to stay where he was; and three thousand miles of ocean rolled between him and the object of his thoughts.

Having reached this conclusion, with a weary sigh he turned to seek Colonel Haywood's apartments. As he entered the parlor, to his great surprise and pleasure he found Mr. Allen sitting by the colonel.

"I have just heard of your return," said Morton, after a warm greeting. "I met Miss Delaney and her mother walking in the Battery. They also told me of Mrs. Van Zandt's death."

"Yes: her end was very peaceful. It was a great comfort to her to know that Marian was restored to her father. And to you that happy circumstance is due. You have placed both father and daughter under a deep debt of gratitude, Mr. Morton. When are you going over to see them and let them personally thank you?"

The word "gratitude" grated on Morton's feelings, and he replied, somewhat coldly, "I certainly shall make no claim upon Sir James Ross or his daughter on account of any little service which I have rendered. They need feel under no obligation to me."

"You might make another claim now, George," said Colonel Haywood, smiling. "Mr. Allen tells me that the young lady is no longer engaged to Radcliff. I know well enough that you love your little prairie flower as truly as when you first sought me on her behalf at that Western fort."

"I'll not deny to you, my old friends, that I have cherished for Marian, from the day I first saw her, a love that has only grown in strength with the years since. But if it was presumption for me to aspire to win her as the adopted daughter of Mr. Van Zandt, do you think Sir James Ross would look more leniently upon my audacity? Besides, I have little reason to think my suit would be favorably received by the young lady herself."

"She was very fond of you as a child; and I do not believe she has changed any more than you have."

"You forget," replied Morton, "that she has been engaged."

"That was a mistake from the beginning," said Mr. Allen. "I think she was urged into it, and was glad to be released."

"I don't believe she ever would have yielded,

if she had not thought that you were dead," said the colonel. "I never shall forget the day when I told her you had been killed by that Roman mob. I felt as if I had stabbed her to the heart. I do not know that I should have told you, George ; but you have had many hard things to meet. I carried you off, when as I now know, it must have been a great sacrifice to leave her, and I have seen how the long suspense has worn upon your brave spirit, cheerful as you have always tried to appear. Now I want you to go back to her ; and I believe a full reward will be given you for all your noble service to me."

George's head was bowed with an emotion he could not wholly control. But finally looking up he said, "Supposing such great joy could be mine, how can I leave you here alone to seek it ?"

"I have made a proposal to Colonel Haywood," said Uncle Aleck. "I shall be in the city this winter, preparing my book on botany for publication. We two old fellows could take care of each other. You hurried away so suddenly that you need to return to complete your business. I can assure you of a hearty

welcome at Ross Castle, from both father and daughter; though what will be your chances in wooing I must leave you to discover."

"My dear friends, you have placed a great temptation before me, and I can not resist the desire to see Marian again, if it is only to be doomed to disappointment. In that case I shall return, to be from henceforth a lonely man, and wholly devoted to you, colonel, as long as you live."

"The 'Queen Charlotte' sails for England in a few days. She is a good ship. I would advise you to secure a passage in her," said Mr. Allen.

Morton assented to this proposal, and the friends then separated for the night.

After a busy week, Morton found himself once more afloat, with his face turned toward the Old World.

CHAPTER XXXII.

AGAIN IN THE HIGHLANDS.

MR. AND MRS. SCHUYLER and Helen Grey were spending the beautiful month of October in the old Knox Headquarters at New Windsor. It was a great pleasure for Helen to return to the region of her old home, a spot so full of recollections both sweet and sad.

She enjoyed the quiet home life at Mrs. Allison's, roaming through the woods or rowing on the Moodna, with May and Will for companions. They never tired of asking questions about her journey, and hearing over and over, the thrilling story of her shipwreck.

On the last day of her stay in the country she stole from the house for a lonely ramble. The afternoon sun was throwing long shadows on her pathway as she followed the windings of the glen. Finding a secluded nook, she sat

down and listened to the music of the water wheel, just as she and Marian had heard it on the morning of her first meeting with Radcliff. In memory, she now went over all their past intercourse. She recalled the bitter discovery she had made at West Point, in finding that she had given her love to one who did not value it. She remembered the dreary months that followed, when in her quiet country home, and in the monotonous routine of daily duties, she had fought out her battle and finally gained peace.

That summer idyl seemed to have been renewed, and now as she sat on the moss-covered rock, carelessly swinging her sun-bonnet filled with autumn leaves, while the breeze played with her stray locks, she looked up into the gold and scarlet maples over her head, and allowed her fancy to picture other and denser woods, and one toiling there who had begun nobly to redeem the past.

She knew that he did not intend to bury himself in those woods for a longer time than would enable him to get a start for higher work—work to which her words had given him faith and courage to aspire. She recalled many of their

long talks, as they had paced the deck of the "Queen Charlotte."

From this delightful reminiscence, she was aroused by approaching footsteps, and looking up in amazement, she saw the object of her thoughts standing before her. The color forsook her cheek, and her heart seemed almost to cease beating.

"Forgive me," said Radcliff, "I fear I have startled you. But Mrs. Allison said she saw you going down the ravine, and I could not resist the temptation to follow."

"I thought you were now in western New York," faltered Helen.

"I was there last week, but I have had an offer from a law firm in Detroit, the head of which was an old friend of my father's. He proposes that I should review my studies with him, and work into practice as I am able, promising all the help he can give me. I came to New York to see if Mr. Schuyler would release me from my engagement with him, and I found he was up here. He has very kindly said that I must accept this chance."

"How soon do you go?"

"In a day or two." He was holding her

hand in his. It trembled, and she again became pale as she thought, "Will he go away and say nothing?"

Harry knew now that he loved her, and he believed she loved him. But was it wise to tell her; to seek to bind her by any pledge, when he still had his good name to establish and his fortune to win?

She felt her position embarrassing, and proposed that they should return to the house. He dropped her hand, and in silence they began their walk. Helen could think of nothing except that they might once more be parted, never again to meet. She was, she thought, probably mistaken, and he did not care for her as she had hoped, after all. Blinded by this turmoil of feeling, she stumbled and would have fallen, if he had not caught her.

Placing her on a seat beneath an old tree, he said, with a great struggle for calmness,

"Miss Grey, when I came here to-day I only hoped to see you once more. I could not go away without expressing my gratitude; but now I can not place so many miles between us without knowing whether you can ever forgive my wrong conduct in the past."

"I can," she said, meeting his glance for a brief moment.

"But this does not satisfy me. I want your love. Dearest, would it be possible for me to win that in time? I have no right to ask for it now, I am not yet worthy—yet, Helen, give me just one word of hope before I go."

"You ask for what you have already." He heard the words, faint as they were, sprang toward her and clasped her close in his arms.

After some hours had passed, and they had turned homewards in the gloaming, he said,

"It seems selfish in me to seek to bind your fate to mine, to leave you anxious and alone, waiting perhaps years for my return. You might have better chances, you might meet some other man more worthy of you. You are free, Helen, and though I should come back and find you wedded to another I would not dare complain."

"Do you think any woman who has loved a man through doubt and fear, even when her faith in him had failed, would feel it a hardship to wait, if duty compelled his absence, when she knew with certainty that she was loved? Would it be nothing to her, that with

no blush of shame she could think of him and let her prayers follow him in his wanderings? That across the distance between them words of hope and cheer could sometimes come, and that their hearts were united, no matter how many leagues stretched between? No, a woman who could not bear that test is not worth having."

"Helen, you are right," he replied, "and I believe now, let the coming years bring what changes they may, our confidence in each other will never be shaken."

CHAPTER XXXIII.

ACROSS THE OCEAN ONCE MORE.

AFTER Mrs. Van Zandt's death Marian had returned with her father to his home in Ireland, accompanied, as Miss Delaney had told Morton, by Mr. Allen and Miss Radcliff. In Marian's intercourse with her father all her hopes from that relationship were realized, and every day the tie between them grew stronger.

With feelings of awe the young girl approached the old castle, where for hundreds of years her ancestors had lived. It was a large gray stone building, its many gables and turrets covered with green ivy, that festooned the windows and climbed even to the highest tower.

The wide view included in the distance beautiful lakes between steep dark mountains, while the castle was surrounded by a richly

ornamented park, extending over several miles of hill and dale.

The cottages belonging to the estate were not visible from the mansion, but Marian soon found them out, and was a welcome visitor in the humble though neat homes. Sir James, unlike many great land-owners, gave his people little cause to complain.

Mrs. O'Flanagan's delight in her young mistress was unbounded; and Marian often spent hours in her little white-washed cottage, hearing over and over her experiences while in Naples, and how she had told Morton about "her gairl Maria an' the lost childer," and how she took to herself the credit of restoring Marian to her father, thus making amends for her daughter's misdoings.

"Sure, Miss Marian," she would say, "it was worth spendin' ivery cint o' me life's airnin's to see the master's face that blessed mornin' whin I got back to Ross Castle wid me letter. An' indade, Mr. Morton is jist the foinest jintleman iver a poor cratur saw; an' moind ye, I'm tellin' the bare truth, widout a word of consalement. If I'd been a quane he couldn't have been more perlite, sayin' whin we got into that tirrible

city o' Paris, may the saints bless him! 'I'll look afther ye an' the childer, an' yees kin rest contint till I know whether I kin go with yees or not.' An' thin whin he couldn't lave, didn't he coom see me off, bringin' some tay, sugar, an' whisky, to kape me heart warm while crossin' thim timestuous says. He towld me he would be coming here soon. Faith! I belaved he'd kape his promise, an' I'll niver thrust a mon again if he don't."

Marian, too, had hoped and trusted in this promise, but the months slipped by and brought no tidings from him.

However, she now found full occupation, and much content, if not perfect happiness. There are times in individual as well as national life when there is little to relate. Some writer describes these periods as "the happy silences of history." Unfortunately, in this transitory world they can not last long.

Adjoining Sir James Ross's estate lived young Lord Kinmore. He was immediately attracted by Marian's beauty, and soon became her ardent suitor. But when she gave him a kind though firm refusal, her father remonstrated, declaring the young lord to be a man

whom he most highly esteemed, and whom above all others he would like to welcome as a son-in-law, having known and been attached to him for years.

"My child!" said Sir James, "this estate is entailed, and goes to a cousin after my death. You will have wealth but no home. Why do you refuse a man so well fitted to make you happy?"

Marian clasped her arms around her father's neck, and hiding her flushed face and tearful eyes, said, in low broken tones, "Because, father, I have no heart to give him. Surely I can be content with your love and protection."

"Yes, if you could have them always. But I am no longer young. The probabilities are that you will outlive me and be left entirely alone. Who has won your heart, darling? Do you think I would refuse you to any one you could love?"

Marian then told of her attachment to Morton, saying that it had been formed in her childhood, and could never change; that she believed him dead when she allowed herself to become engaged to Radcliff; and that she realized with bitter regret, when she again met

Morton in Sorrento, the false position in which she was placed, and knew that her love for him was as strong as ever.

"Where is Mr. Morton now?"

"I have just heard in a letter from Miss Radcliff that he has returned to America. I think he once cared for me, but he left, supposing I loved Radcliff; and to be engaged to a man who had proved himself so worthless must have lowered me so much in his esteem that he can no longer respect me. He had intended to make America his home, and it is not probable our paths will cross again. But don't look so grieved, papa darling. I have you now, and may have you much longer than you fear. But if I am left, I should be happier as I am. See what a noble, useful life Miss Radcliff has spent."

So the conversation ended, and as her father was called away from home, she started out for a lonely walk through the park, and along the edge of the nearest lake.

On a steep promontory overlooking the water was their ivy-covered chapel, in which her mother was buried. The outlook from this point was magnificent. Marian sat down on

the chapel steps, and recalled the last conversation she had had there, with Miss Radcliff, at about the sunset hour. They were to part the next day, probably never to meet again.

After a long talk about their past intercourse, and the loved one they had so recently laid to her last rest, Marian had said, with some hesitation, "Aunty, I have often wondered that you never rewarded Uncle Aleck's devoted love. It has seemed to me you might spend such a peaceful old age together. Forgive me," she added, impulsively throwing her arms around her companion's neck, as a look of pain came into the old lady's eyes, "I ought not to have said that, but I have so long seen how deeply attached he is to you; and as we were so soon to part I could not resist speaking."

"If I could have responded to his wishes I would have done so, dearie."

Then letting her eyes rest on the purple mountain tops and emerald hills reflected in the clear water beneath them, she said in a low, sad voice, as if speaking more to herself than her companion: "Years ago I met one, the king to whom my heart yielded its unwavering allegiance. For a few brief weeks I lived in

another world. I only knew that I was near him, heard his voice, and felt the charm of his society. It was not until I saw him with another that I was aroused from my bright dream to the real life stretching on before me. He had chosen one worthy to be his queen. He never thought of a little insignificant body like me, except with kindly friendship.

"And so, darling, you have my romance. Thirty years have passed since then, but I would rather keep that memory than share any lot that has been offered me."

"Where is he now?"

"Among the legislators of our land. He was noble, he was worthy of all honor. I have watched his upward course from afar, and hailed each fresh triumph, for I knew he could not fail to win."

"But oh, Miss Radcliff, how sad for you!"

"No, love; my life has not been sad, though lonely; for my brother was absorbed in his business, and Harry never had many thoughts to spare for his old aunty. But I've found true, loving friends, and many flowers have sprung up in my pathway."

"Yes, from seed of your own planting."

"In a few instances it may be, for as we sow so shall we reap. Some scatter only worthless weeds; some bring in a rich; full harvest, and some, toiling in quiet by-ways, may yet come home, bringing with them a few hard won sheaves."

Here their talk had ended, as Sir James and Mr. Allen had joined them. But now, weeks after, sitting on the same spot, Marian, as has been said, recalled this conversation, and thought, "My life will probably be like Miss Radcliff's."

It was the anniversary of the day which she had spent at Pompeii, and as she reviewed all the events of her meeting with Morton and the weeks that followed, and believed that they would never meet again, her heart was filled with despair. She rose and entered the little chapel, and kneeling down beside the beautiful monument erected to her mother's memory, bowed her head upon the spot where her own name had been erased from the stone, and sobbed in bitter, passionate grief: "He has ceased to care for me, if he ever did. O mother, mother! my heart is broken. Why didn't the little girl perish with her brother?"

How can I live on through the long, long, lonely future? If I could only lie down by your side and end forever this weary heartache!"

But rising, she dashed away the tears and resolutely put back her rebellious thoughts, and going to the organ, opened it and began, as was her wont, to find relief in music. As she played, her whole life appeared to shape itself into the harmonies that awoke under her fingers.

As she played, a visitor entered the chapel unseen, and stood breathlessly listening, powerless to move or speak. But the music, which had been rolling in a grand torrent of sound, suddenly became soft and sad as the wailing notes of an Æolian harp, and to it were added words in which the grief in her heart seemed to find expression.

"November's air was fresh and chill,
When standing on the rocky hill,
The hill that over-looks the sea
You talked confidingly to me :
Me, whom your keen artistic sight
Had not yet learned to read aright,
Since I had veiled my heart from you
And loved you better than you knew.

" You did not see the bitter trace
Of anguish sweep across my face ;
You did not hear my proud heart beat
Heavy and slow, beneath your feet.
You thought of triumphs still unwon,
Of glorious deeds as yet undone,
And all the while you talked to me,
I watched the gulls float lonesomely
Till lost amid the distant blue :
And loved you better than you knew.

" Your life's proud aim, your art's high truth,
Have kept the promise of your youth,
And while you won the crown which now
Breaks into bloom upon your brow,
My soul cried strongly out to you
Across the ocean's yearning blue,
And loved you better than you knew."

Here she dropped her hands from the keys, and bowed her head upon them, while again the tears fell thick and fast. But suddenly the silence was broken by a familiar voice calling, "Marian, Marian." She started to her feet, and turning, met Morton's eyes gazing into hers, and his arms stretched out with eager longing.

A mist gathered before her. She seemed to be again the little oppressed slave of the prairie ; and George was calling her, standing as she had

so often seen him, against the Western sunset, while she flew from the wretched cabin and its cruel inmate, to his sheltering arms. Not since then had she heard those tones. And now her name seemed to come from a great distance ; and his form appeared as a vision of the past.

But again came the call, more passionate, more appealing than in those childish days : the form drew nearer, till waking to the reality of the present, with a glad cry she sprang forward, and the woman found the refuge so often sought by the child.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE CONCLUSION.

SEVERAL years have passed away. War has again swept over this land of liberty, but once more peace is restored, and it is October in the Highlands. The mountains, now gorgeous in their coloring, are enveloped in a soft haze, which like a bridal veil only enhances their beauty.

There is not a cloud in the sky, and many eyes hail with joy this perfect day ; for at noon, Harry Radcliff and Helen Grey are to be married in the little church where her father used to preach, and where she felt that his spirit would rest in benediction upon her.

During that second struggle for America's liberty, Radcliff had borne a brave part and had won high honor. Now an established and successful lawyer at Detroit, he had come back to claim the promise made by Helen when he

found her gathering autumn leaves in that wild ravine.

From far and near their friends have come, to witness this marriage in the little church, which no longer stands in funereal gloom, but in a fresh coat of white, glances out among the red leaves of oaks and maples.

Among the guests gathered there, we may recognize a number of old acquaintances. The Allison family, even grandma, who is still enjoying a green old age, and Mr. and Mrs. Schuyler; Miss Radcliff, looking sweeter and brighter than ever, and Uncle Aleck, now a well known *savant*, whose authority in matters of natural history is widely recognized; and Colonel Haywood, now an octogenarian, but with a memory unimpaired, still delighting to recall his experiences during the first struggle for America's liberty, while rejoicing over her last triumph.

And not least noticed among the guests, are Mr. and Mrs. George Morton, who have lately returned to New York and made the Van Zandt manor their permanent home. Sir James Ross is no longer living, and the old castle has passed to another heir; but Marian comes back to her

early American home, where by her husband's side, she can live out the ideal of perfect service which she has so long hoped to attain.

Grandma Allison claimed, as Helen's oldest friend, that the wedding feast should be at her home. The old house had been transformed by loving hands into a perfect bower of beauty, with wreaths of flowers and autumn leaves, and never had those walls rung with more genuine mirth and joy.

When nearly all the guests had gone, Harry drew Helen out to the same moss-covered rock where she had first pledged to him her love.

"Helen," said Harry, as he drew her close to his side, "many have spoken to me to-day of your grand old father. What a splendid record! A life of more than threescore and ten of faithful service!—no years of sin and folly to look back upon! But whatever I am now or hope to become, darling, I owe it all to you."

Leaning her head upon his shoulder she softly replied, "And I owe to the teachings of my blessed old father all that is of any worth in me."

Then in blissful silence they listened to the

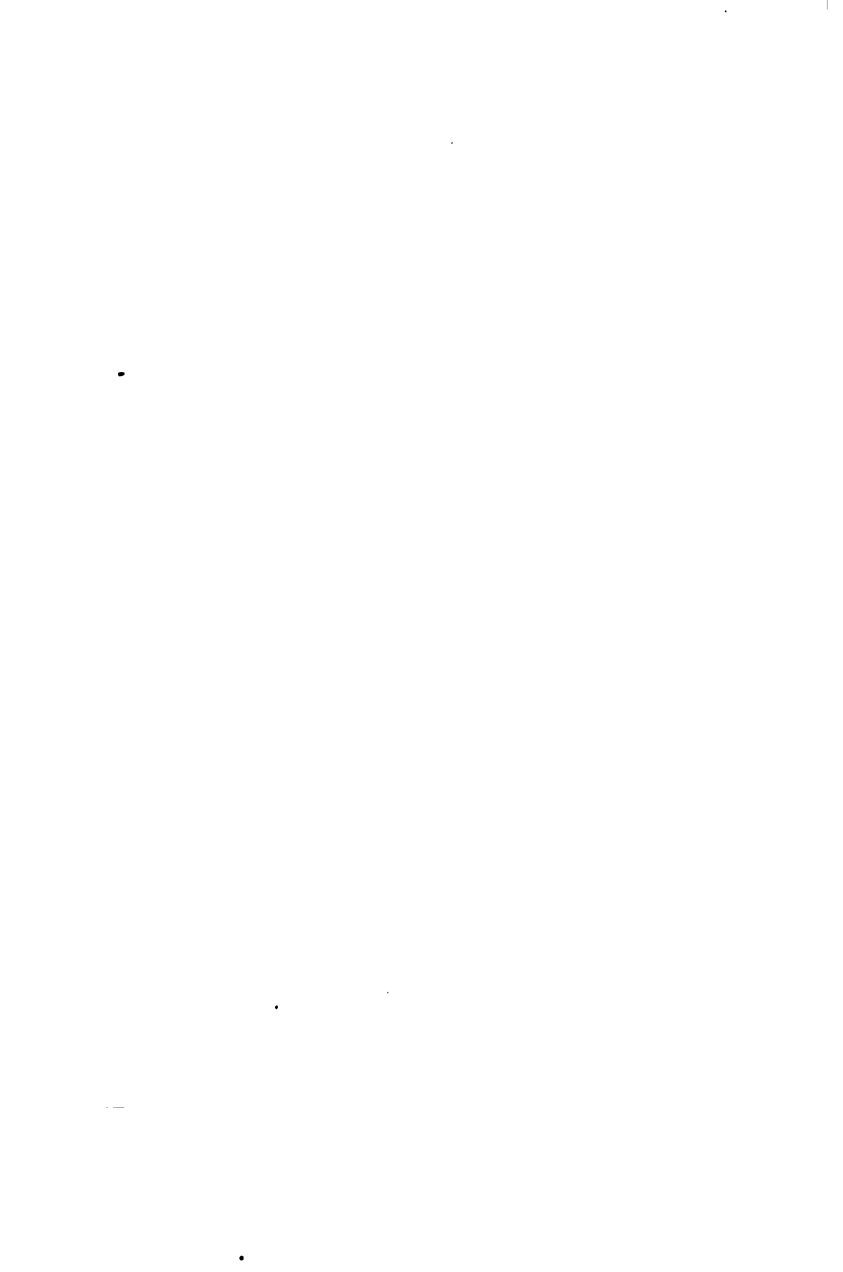
music of the old water-wheel and watched the setting of the new moon, until it reached the southern side of the ravine, stood poised a moment, then dipped its crescent and was gone.

So too the friends with whom we have tarried through these pages now pass from our view.

THE END.







1.25

